The College of New Rochelle Centennial Year Remembrances



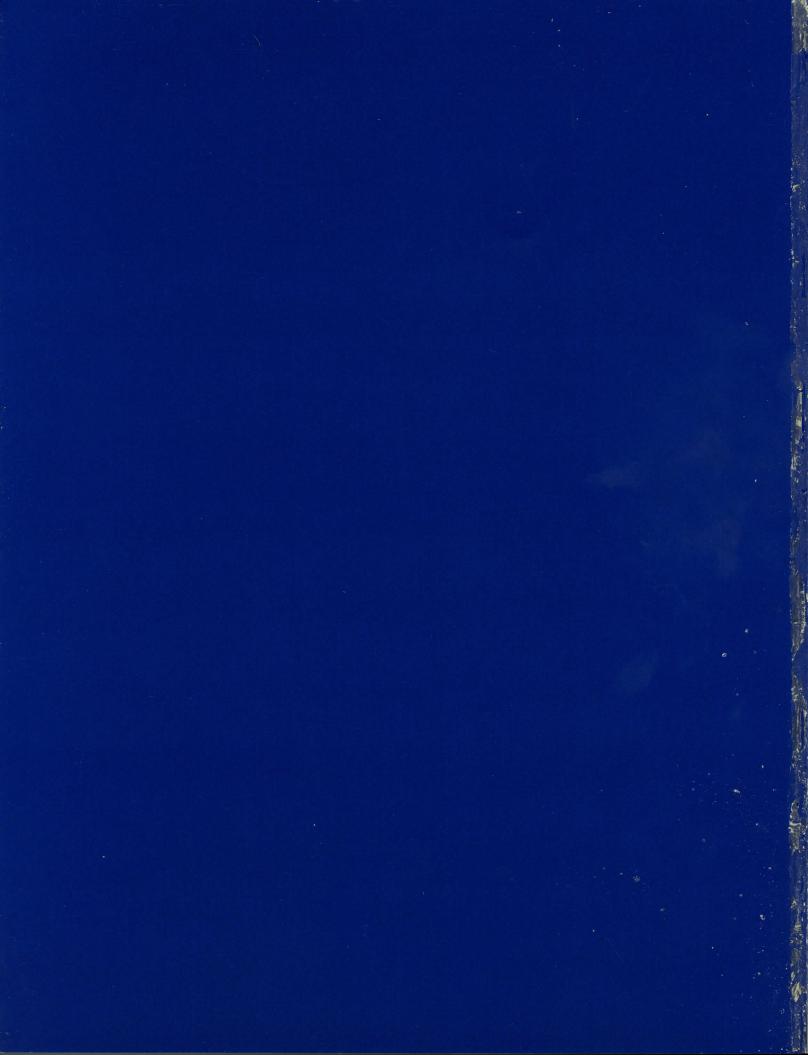


Table of Contents

THE COLLEGE OF NEW ROCHELLE CENTENNIAL YEAR REMEMBRANCES

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT	2
Centennial Opening Liturgy Homily	10
CENTENNIAL OPENING CONVOCATION Celebrating the Centennial of The College of New Rochelle with Gratitude for the Past, Enthusiasm for the Present, and Confidence in the Future Mary E. Lyons	12
THE PRIMACY OF THE LIBERAL ARTS CONVOCATION Learning How to Learn Indra K. Nooyi	15
THE PRIMACY OF THE LIBERAL ARTS COLLOQUY Rich Traditions, Current Visions of Liberal Education. Bridget Puzon, OSU	
A Catholic Vision for the Liberal Arts	21
Staying the Course: The Liberal Arts in American Catholic Higher Education	25
Liberal Arts: Core of Accreditation	29
AT OUR HEART: DIVERSITY CONVOCATION Cornel West Welcomed to Celebrate Diversity of CNR Community	32
IN CELEBRATION OF WOMEN'S COLLEGES CONVOCATION Creativity, Innovation, Celebration: The Future of Women's Colleges Patricia A. McGuire	33
IN CELEBRATION OF WOMEN'S COLLEGES COLLOQUY Women'S Colleges in America: A Brief History Barbara F. McManus	38
The Role of Catholic Wo <mark>men's Colleges.</mark> Mary Pat Seurkamp	
Why a Women's College	44
Women's Colleges and Their Future	47
EDUCATION FOR SERVICE CONVOCATION Crossing the Cattle Gate Patricia Cruise, SC	49
COMMENCEMENT Celebrating the Past, Embracing the Future Jean Baptiste Nicholson, OSU	51
FOR THE SECOND CENTURY, WHY CATHOLIC? CONVOCATION Making a Way: The New Challenge of "Catholic" Elizabeth A. Johnson, CSJ	53
CENTENNIAL CLOSING LITURGY OF THANKSGIVING Homily Reverend J. Joseph Flynn, OFM Cap.	58
CENTENNIAL YEAR HONORARY DEGREE RECIPIENTS	61



2 The College of New Rochelle / Centennial Year Remembrances



A Letter from the President

DEAR FRIENDS,

n planning for our Centennial Year, it was my desire to invite to The College of New Rochelle distinguished leaders from the academic, religious, and business worlds for a series of extraordinary convocations that would focus on the significant values that have animated our great institution for these 100 years. These women and men engaged us in serious discussions of the essentials that have infused The College of New Rochelle with life throughout its first century: recognition of what it means to be a Catholic college, unwavering commitment to women, the primacy of the liberal arts, unreserved embrace of diversity, and devotion to education for service.

In this publication we share the wisdom of distinguished friends and colleagues who generously joined in our Centennial celebration. These individuals gifted us with their knowledge, compassion, and vision. We are the beneficiaries of their munificence.

These scholars, professionals, and leaders in their fields illumined our historic mission and allowed the College Community to contemplate and evaluate anew our relevance and value to the world. In a very real sense the opportunity of these extraordinary convocations and colloquies was a gift to ourselves.

We opened the year in September 2003 with a Centennial Mass in Holy Family Chapel celebrated by a dear friend, Archbishop Joseph Pittau of the Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education. Archbishop Pittau set the goals for our year of exploration by reminding the Community that we cannot live our faith if we do not live it with a sense of responsibility and of social commitment.

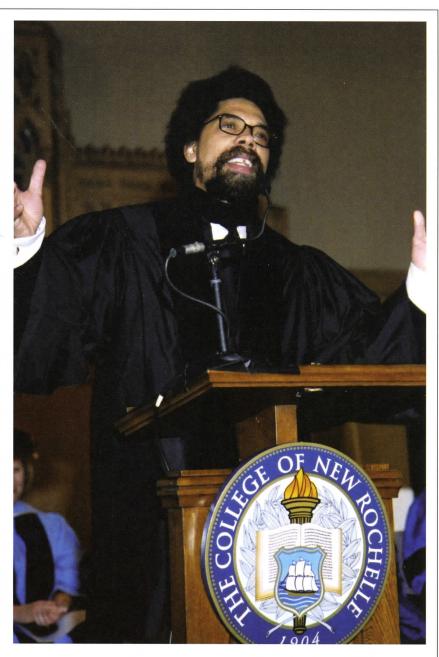
Tasked with this challenge we entered into thoughtful discourse over the following months, responding to the elegant addresses of our invited speakers: Mary E. Lyons, President of the University of San Diego; Indra K. Nooyi, President and Chief Financial Officer, PepsiCo; Cornel West, Class of 1943 University Professor of Religion at Princeton University; Patricia A. McGuire, President of Trinity College in Washington, D.C.; Patricia A. Cruise, SC, President of Covenant House; Elizabeth A. Johnson, CSJ, Distinguished Professor of Theology at Fordham University; as well as our own Jean Baptiste Nicholson, OSU, '60, Principal of The Ursuline School in New Rochelle, who spoke to the Class of 2004 on the rich Ursuline legacy of which the graduates were now a part.



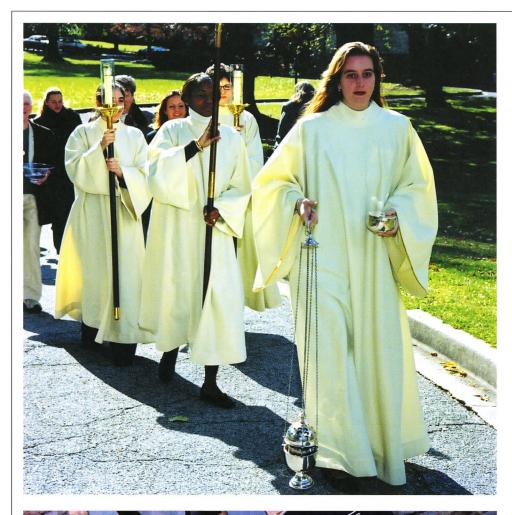








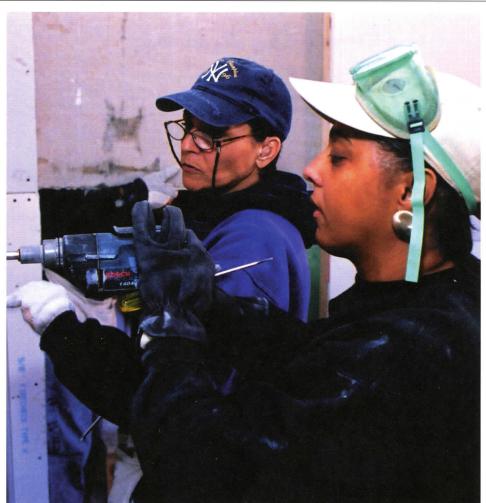












ater in the academic year, we convened a second colloquy to address the value of women-centered education. That panel included: Mary Pat Seurkamp, President of the College of Notre Dame of Maryland; Lisa Marsh Ryerson, President of Wells College; and Daniel Cheever Jr., President of Simmons College. The moderator of this colloquy was Barbara Wismer McManus '64, Professor Emerita of Classics at the College.

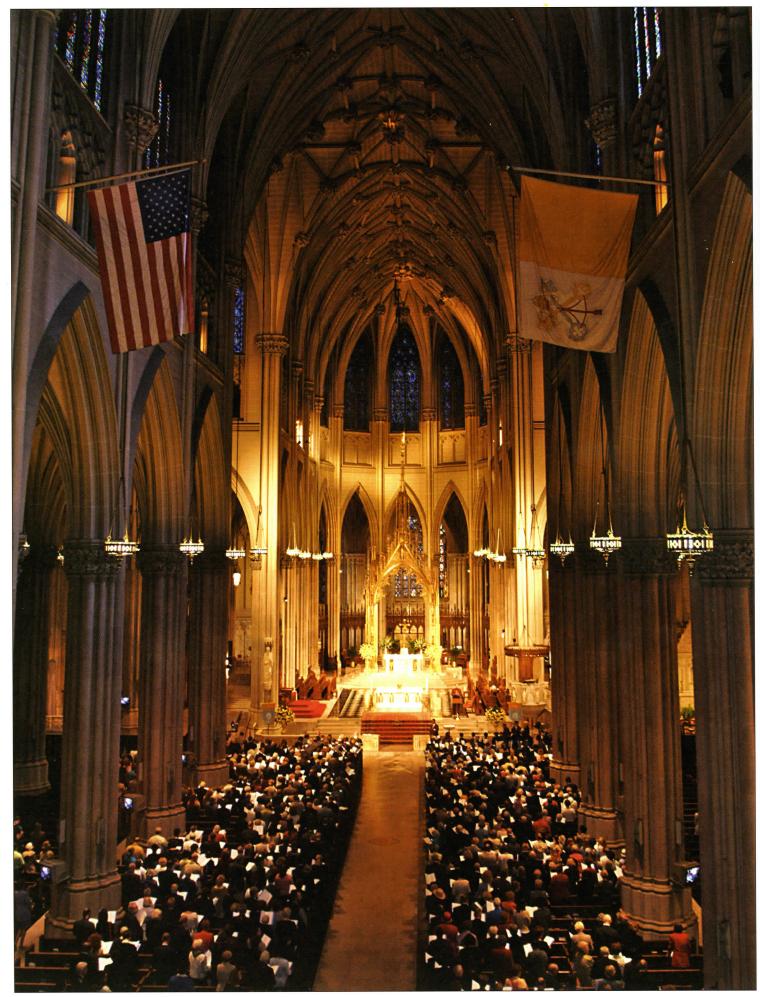
Fittingly, we concluded the Centennial Year with a Liturgy of Thanksgiving at the magnificent St. Patrick's Cathedral, where our College Chaplain, Father Joseph Flynn, OFM Cap., delivered a moving homily, speaking of the values that are central to the mission of the College and the great vision of Mother Irene Gill and the Ursulines, who brought forth this wonderful institution.

It is my privilege to present to you this rich harvest of insights and ideas that came from our Centennial Year. In these pages I know you will find humor, substance, and profound faith. I hope you will continue the discussion presented in these pages with your family and friends and that you, too, will add to the on-going conversation that captivates us here on campus. Write to us, tell us your thoughts, dreams, and hopes for this sacred and blessed place, The College of New Rochelle. Continue the discussion begun by Mother Irene Gill and the other Ursuline foundresses of The College of New Rochelle who followed the imperatives of Saint Angela Merici to risk new things and be ready for big surprises. We trust that the pages of this publication will provide you with just that opportunity.

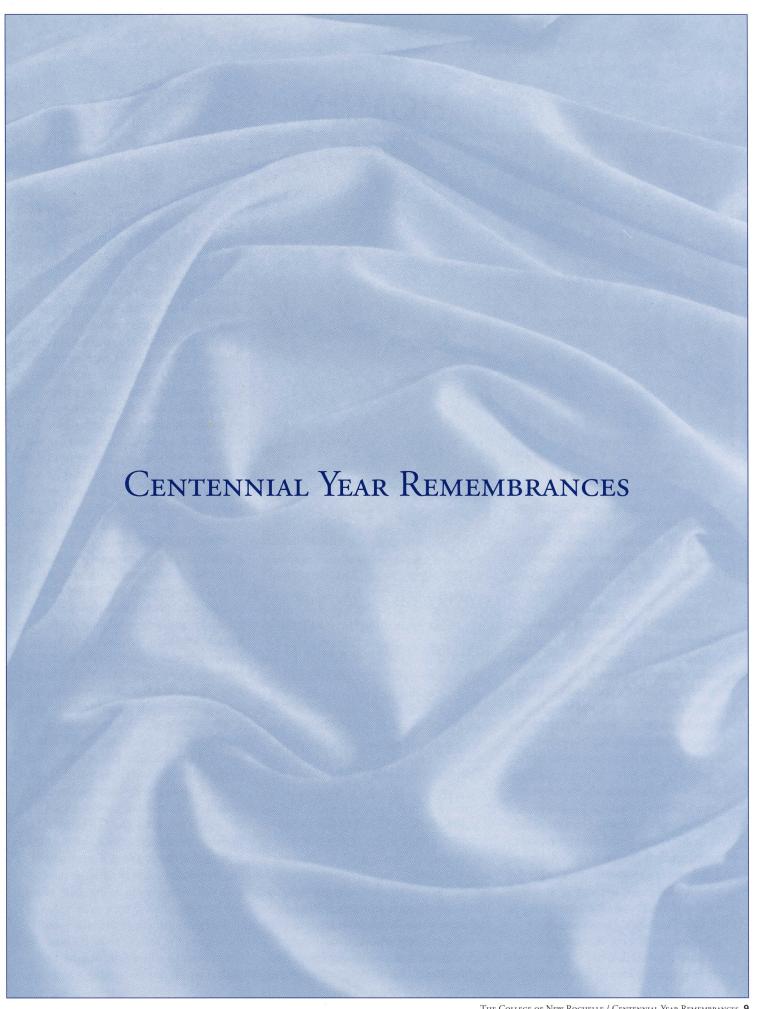
Sincerely,

Stephen J. Sweeny, Ph.D.

President



8 The College of New Rochelle / Centennial Year Remembrances



HOMILY

Archbishop Joseph Pittau, SJ
Secretary of the Congregation for Catholic Education

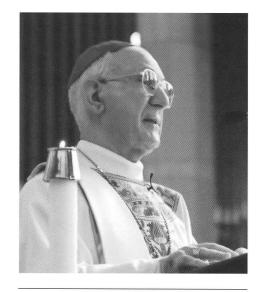
n this happy occasion of the opening of the celebrations for the Centennial of The College of New Rochelle, I would like first of all to convey to the entire community of the College His Holiness John Paul II's blessings and felicitations, and the congratulations and best wishes of His Eminence Cardinal Zenon Grocholewski, Prefect of the Congregation for Catholic Education.

Today, September 14, is the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. In my homily, in contemplating the Cross, I would like to consider and reflect with you a little on the meaning and mission of a Catholic college like The College of New Rochelle.

1. THE CROSS AS OUR STANDARD a) vertical dimension

The cross is the fundamental symbol of the Christian faith. The image of the cross is the symbol of Christianity, the sign of total, unconditional and freely given love. The cross is the sign of the love of the Father, who so loved the world that He offered it His only Son. It is the sign of the love of the Son, too, who gave Himself into our hands and freely accepted death, death on the cross. The very shape of the cross draws us to profound reflections. The vertical line from height to depth and the horizontal line that opens itself up to attract, reach, and embrace everyone symbolizes important elements for our reflection about what it is to be a Christian, and about what a Catholic college should be and teach.

The horizontal bar cannot stay in place unless the vertical bar is deeply and securely planted, allowing it to reach up



THE CROSS IS THE SIGN OF THE LOVE OF THE FATHER, WHO SO LOVED THE WORLD THAT HE OFFERED IT HIS ONLY SON. IT IS THE SIGN OF THE LOVE OF THE SON, TOO, WHO GAVE HIMSELF INTO OUR HANDS AND FREELY ACCEPTED DEATH, DEATH ON THE CROSS. THE VERY SHAPE OF THE CROSS DRAWS US TO PROFOUND REFLECTIONS.

to the heights. In fact, the vertical dimension is fairly clear: it represents the invitation and commitment to sustain and support the bonds between humanity and God, between earth and heaven. Furthermore, it illustrates our longing to find an ever deeper understanding of the

transcendent element in our lives and also an ever more intimate communion with God. The experience of liturgical and personal prayer, of spiritual direction, of Church activity enters into this vertical line. This vertical axis signifies also an in-depth formation in philosophical and theological thought, in reflecting on the fundamental problems of life. It embodies the mystical dimension of the academy, when the plethora of our words explaining all that is falls silent in contemplation of the Word, through whom all things came into being.

b) horizontal dimension

The images that can be drawn from the horizontal dimension are also very clear. The horizontal arm invites us to embrace the whole world with a love, a solidarity, and a responsibility, that go beyond any one individual. This loving embrace begins within the family and is born out of the experience that children have, when they feel and experience that their parents genuinely love them: a love that allows the children to understand themselves as individuals who are important and that manifests itself not in the giving of things, but in the parents' gift of self. This love then expands to include society, work, one's city, one's region, one's country, the world. The challenge of these two dimensions of the cross is expressed today in the pairing of faith and justice, which is the ever ancient yet ever new presentation of our Lord's new commandment of love.

Just as we cannot reduce the Gospel message to the merely socio-political dimension, so also we cannot live the faith if we do not live it with a sense of

responsibility and of social commitment. This means making an effort to assist young people to gain a greater understanding of human reality in its social, political, economic, and global complexity. It means holding out a hand to those who are marginalized and oppressed, and forming young men and women to integrate into their lives the Gospel values of authentic service of others. It also means preparing young people to be honest citizens, who know and observe the law and who have a sense of civic responsibility. Catholic universities need to be characterized by their formation of future executives, both in the private and public sector, who are competent, honest, and efficient: leaders who do not accept violence and corruption in the public life of the nation but who boldly confront such injustices when they see them.

Therefore, every time we see the two arms of the cross, we should remember these essential elements of the Christian faith: the faith from which justice flows, a justice that is animated by love. Thus, a university is not authentically Christian if it does not have a contemplative and a social justice dimension, expressed by both professors and students.

2. OUTREACH

The third reflection that I want to make in relation to the Catholic college is "outreach." In the Gospel, Jesus says, "Let us move on to the neighboring villages so that I may proclaim the Good News there also. That is what I have come to do" (Mark I:36-39). Jesus' policy of outreach was entrusted to his disciples and explicitly described at the end of the Gospel according to St. Mark. Our Lord sent his apostles out to the ends of the earth to preach the Good News of salvation. Because of that sending, we are here at this moment in history. The Ursuline Sisters who founded The College of New Rochelle lived of the same spirit.

The fundamental drive of Christianity, like the driving force in



Christ himself, is to bring the Good News of God's personal love to everyone, everywhere. He pours His Holy Spirit into our hearts, and empowers us with His dynamism so that we can be Christ's witnesses. Christ is the outreach of the Father, and the Christian communities, the Christian colleges, are the outreach of Christ. In other words, we, as members of the Catholic College of New Rochelle, are the outreach of Christ. The College of New Rochelle; now, in response to new situations and needs, it has six campuses.

A college is authentic in its identity to the degree that it is generous in outreach. Knowledge is not a commodity to be stored securely in a locked vault but rather a flame, like the Olympic torch, which should be passed on from generation to generation, transcending the boundaries of nations and cultures. As was commonly repeated in medieval philosophy, *omne bonum est diffusivum sui*, meaning: whatever is good diffuses itself. That is, good things and good people do not turn in on themselves, but radiate themselves toward the other. When this is taken seriously, it becomes evident that

the most penetrating insights, the most treasured realizations should be made available to everyone as far as possible.

This element of outreach could also be expressed by the powerful image of the bridge. This outreach serves as the bridge between God and the college community, between rich and poor, between faith and reason, between various Christian communions, between Christianity and other religions, between East and West and South and North. This outreach is the emanation of the Good News of the love of God into our world of fragile peace and broken promises—a world made new through the life of Christ.

The vertical and horizontal lines of the cross speak to us of faith, justice, and service. The stretched arms of Christ on the cross want to reach and embrace everybody. The Catholic College of New Rochelle, while celebrating past achievements, wants to renew its commitment to giving a solid human, intellectual, spiritual, and professional formation to the young women who choose to study here.

CELEBRATING THE CENTENNIAL OF THE COLLEGE OF NEW ROCHELLE WITH GRATITUDE FOR THE PAST, ENTHUSIASM FOR THE PRESENT, AND CONFIDENCE IN THE FUTURE

Mary E. Lyons
President, University of San Diego

t is indeed for me a tremendous honor and privilege to be among you on this day as you inaugurate the Centennial celebration of your College.

Not long ago we celebrated the dawn of a new millennium and witnessed an increasingly rare moment when nations and cultures set aside their differences on one night turning darkness into light by igniting dazzling fireworks that extended across the horizon of the entire globe. For The College of New Rochelle it is not sufficient to create one brilliant spectacle to honor its Centennial anniversary. Today marks the beginning of an entire year of celebration and deservedly so. Just as the church marked the new millennium with a jubilee year, so too does this Catholic college find reason to remember, to reflect, and to celebrate during many occasions during this academic year, so that in 2004 you will be thoroughly prepared to renew your charter and look forward confidently to the next hundred years of The College of New Rochelle.

The invitation to join you for this occasion prompted me to read your history to reflect on your achievements and to identify some of those enduring qualities that, for the first 100 years, gave The College of New Rochelle its character. Among these I discovered is an educational mission that relies on a strong humanist orientation, especially evident in the liberal arts curriculum in the School of Arts and Sciences. Another foundational prin-



ciple is the College's commitment to the education of women. And a third characteristic of the educational mission that has been evident from the beginning, and becomes even more prominent in our own times, is the pioneering work of this College as it adapts to the challenges of the times.

Most notable in recent decades, as has been mentioned, has been the success in expanding its curriculum, extending its reach into the heart of New York City and into the neighborhoods of the metropolitan region. The College of New Rochelle makes its home easily wherever there are students. And indeed adapts itself to meet their educational needs.

Most colleges and universities speak with pride about their founders, their traditions, their roots. This should be particularly true for The College of New Rochelle because its roots are so ancient and so enduring. Those enduring marks of The College of New Rochelle – a curriculum steeped in the liberal arts, a commitment to the education of women and responsiveness to change – all are generative gifts from Saint Angela Merici and her company of women who in turn bequeathed these to the Ursuline sisters who founded the College.

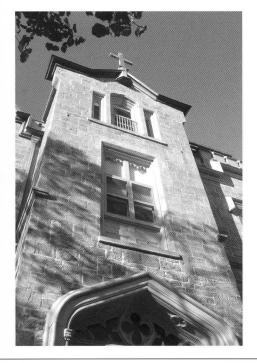
Now, it would be too great a stretch to suggest that the sixteenth century Italian saint influenced directly the educational philosophy of this or any other institution. But the significance of her influence on the development of that philosophy is best understood when one considers that Angela spent her life surrounded by the vitality, the intellectual ferment and the artistic achievements of one of sixteenth century Italy's most prosperous regions.

This daughter of Brescia and Lombardy found a spiritual home for the great humanist influences of her era through her profession as a secular Franciscan. For the sons and daughters of Francis, the incarnation is at the heart of a way of life that reminds us of Christ's invitation to celebrate, respect, and love all creation. This very human, personal expression of God's love for every human being was at the core of Angela's vision for her company of women.

While the particular form of life for these women changed over time, Angela's influence on her daughters and on the MOST COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES SPEAK WITH PRIDE ABOUT THEIR FOUNDERS, THEIR TRADITIONS, THEIR ROOTS. THIS SHOULD BE PARTICULARLY TRUE FOR THE COLLEGE OF NEW ROCHELLE BECAUSE ITS ROOTS ARE SO ANCIENT AND SO ENDURING. THOSE ENDURING MARKS OF THE COLLEGE OF NEW ROCHELLE – A CURRICULUM STEEPED IN THE LIBERAL ARTS, A COMMITMENT TO THE EDUCATION OF WOMEN AND RESPONSIVENESS TO CHANGE – ALL ARE GENERATIVE GIFTS FROM SAINT ANGELA MERICI AND HER COMPANY OF WOMEN WHO IN TURN BEQUEATHED THESE TO THE URSULINE SISTERS WHO FOUNDED THE COLLEGE.

institutions they established continues. Here, of course, is the heart of the liberal arts. Studies done ennoble and expand the human spirit that nourishes- the intellect bringing men and women into communion with the God whom they discover loves them personally.

Thus, the Ursulines, daughters of Angela, brought with them to the new world an educational orientation that yielded a plan of studies recognizing the multiple dimensions of human development, not least of which is the spiritual. So the preservation of the liberal arts, as foundational for this college, should be no surprise. The courage and determination of Angela to create a company of women committed to prayer and works of



charity also reveal much about the College's continuing contribution to the educational needs of women.

To understand the somewhat radical nature of Angela's plan, one must consider the social conditions for women in sixteenth century Italy. For the most part the social structures of Angela's time supported an understanding of women in terms of their value, regardless of the prosperity of their families. Women were valued as child bearers, as the property of their family, often subjected to arranged marriages in order to extend a family's power or influence. Women were either a source of economic power or a source of economic stress, depending on where they stood in relation to class or birth order.

Angela Merici is born into this social reality. She breaks with convention, after the example of St. Ursula herself, and takes control of her destiny by creating a social group. Not based on blood ties but on the free assent of each woman, a community of free association. The courage of these women liberated them from the boundaries of class and power. Not for selfish reasons, not for personal gain, but for service. They shared their goods in common on behalf of others.

In the context of our present age, are there not similar social structures that bind men and women slavishly to the conventions of class and power? There are structures of power that result in a few having more goods and services because of the many who do not. Our Holy Father Pope John Paul II, in his Encyclical Letter on Social Concerns of the Church,

wrote: "There are some people, the few who possess much, who do not really succeed in being because, through a reversal of the hierarchy of values, they are hindered by the cult of having. And there are others, the many who have little or nothing, who do not succeed in realizing their basic human vocation because they are deprived of essential goods."

In most cultures, including our own, those most acutely affected by poverty, oppression, and injustice are women – and, as a consequence, children. While the foremothers of this college may not have expressed it in these terms, their college, your college, has reason to take pride in this celebration because of its fidelity to the mission of educating women.

It is also fitting on this occasion to note the remarkable gifts of women religious in this country, notably the Ursuline sisters, to attain higher education themselves and receive the degree and credentials they needed to teach in their own college. You might note in the history of this college that in the beginning of The College of New Rochelle few women religious were on the faculty. This would not have been possible because of the severe restrictions placed on them to attend universities. Although the College was founded in 1904, women religious in this country did not begin earning doctoral degrees in any great numbers until the 1930s.

Ironically, despite this, The College of New Rochelle by 1918 was one among 14 colleges recognized as accredited by the Catholic Educational Association. This is indeed a tribute to the Ursulines, who worked in collaboration with laity from the beginning, who made up those early faculty. Ironically, for all the anxiety that is expressed today about the Catholic identity of our colleges and universities, it is helpful to remember that most schools in this country did not offer any theology courses until the 1950s. In fact, a doctorate in sacred theology was rare until recent decades. The first one awarded to a nonordained person at Catholic University was in 1969. And thanks to the St. Mary's Program at Notre Dame, which started in 1943, a handful of sisters – about 25 – received doctorates starting in the 1940s.

Thus, for most of the last century, for most of the history of this college, the scholarship in scripture, systematic theology and moral theology was simply not informed by the experience, the insight, and the intellectual gifts of women. Yet, for all of that, for the lag in theology education at the doctoral level, this Ursuline community educated themselves well. And found among their lay colleagues extraordinary scholars who dedicated themselves to women's education. The fruit of their education and their commitment is evident everywhere.

As you've been told, I, myself, am the indirect beneficiary of this college's commitment to educating women because my own high school teachers, Ursulines of the Western Province, received their degrees and their training here at The College of New Rochelle. The spirit that prompted Angela to break the mold of her own social structures on behalf of leading a life of prayer and work with companions planted the seeds of a pioneering spirit that has grown into a great harvest at this college.

Angela responded to the spirit and adapted it to her time, just as the Ursulines who traveled to the new world did centuries later. Angela's admonition to her companions is as appropriate today as it was nearly 500 years ago. She wrote, "Have confidence and strong faith that God will assist you in everything. Act. Bestir yourselves. Have hope and confi-

dence. Make efforts. Cry to Him with all your hearts. You will certainly see wonders if you direct everything to the praise of the divine majesty and the great good of souls."

These words reveal a flexibility and adaptability so characteristic of those who are liberally educated. They also reveal a spirit of generosity and courage that gave impetus to that first band of Ursulines who traveled to the new world and to those who brought to this region their gift as educators, their own courage, their persistence. All attributes that are made manifest in the history of this wonderful college.

The College of New Rochelle has indeed made prudent choices to change with the times and circumstances. By extending itself to those for whom education has been difficult or simply unavailable, the School of New Resources, for example, with the School of Nursing and the Graduate School, complement well the School of Arts and Sciences, by serving more and more diverse communities of women and men.

I know that I have been personally inspired by the laity and religious who have supported, and continue to support, the College and who themselves must take credit for bold responses to the challenges of our times. I'm edified by this Ursuline community and by the leadership of women I have known: President Emeritus Sister Dorothy Ann Kelly and the scholar Sister Alice Gallin. Now under the wise and creative leadership of President Stephen Sweeny, this college does certainly have great reason for rejoicing.

I conclude with the words of our Holy Father that mark the beginning of the millennium, words most appropriate for this occasion. He exhorts us to remember the past with gratitude, to live the present with enthusiasm, and to look forward to the future with confidence. The College of New Rochelle has every reason to be grateful for its past, to be enthusiastic for its present, and to be confident in its future. I am so grateful to share this moment with you and offer you my warmest congratulations as you begin your Centennial celebration.



LEARNING HOW TO LEARN

INDRA K. NOOYI
PRESIDENT & CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER, PEPSICO

t's a pleasure to be here, and I'm absolutely thrilled to receive this honorary degree from The College of New Rochelle.

This is a very proud, special occasion for me personally, and later on, I'll share why that is so.

But first, I'd like to start with a perspective on a topic that's important not only to students, but to business. It fundamentally speaks to what brings you to this college – namely, the value of pursuing a liberal arts degree.

Being a science major myself, having majored in chemistry and physics as an undergraduate and then going on to my masters in business, I wondered if I could honestly speak to you about the "value of a liberal arts degree."

Curious to find out more about this topic, I went on the Internet, pulled up the Google search engine, decided to skip all the easy search protocols and go straight for the "advanced search engine" – that's the scientist in me!

I typed the words "value of a science education." Google turned up two-three citations, referring to articles that basically said – if I could paraphrase – "You must definitely be a liberal arts oriented person if you type in these search words. The value of a science degree is obvious!"

Next, I typed in "value of a liberal arts degree." Google turned up ten pages, with ten references per page, some references in turn, cross referencing me to ten other articles. "What a valuable degree," I thought to myself, if so much has been written about it.

I quickly went into some of the references and what I saw amazed me: A lot of the articles were in furious defense of the



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THEY HELP US MAKE SENSE OF IT.

liberal arts degree. Titles ranged from "To BA or not to BA," "Liberal Arts degrees – stop on the road to starvation," "Death knell for liberal arts?"

I realized quickly, then, that in reality, no one has needed to stand up to defend the value of a science degree – simply because the value of that kind of education is better established in the market place. Or maybe, these science majors were not equipped with the skills required to convey the value of a science degree eloquently – hence the absence of articles!

Liberal arts majors, on the other hand, tend to be equipped with generalist skill sets that often make them harder to match against prescribed available technical roles.

So – with such an imbalance in the perceived value of these two kinds of degrees – it's not out of line for any liberal arts educator or student to ask the question: "Can the attainment of a liberal arts degree allow me to pay back my student loans?"

Even more intrigued, I began to look at my successful colleagues at work, my more interesting and well-rounded friends, and some of the more brilliant political leaders of the world. I realized quickly that all of them shared one thing in common – they were all schooled in the liberal arts.

I realized then, that there were inherent qualities in a liberal arts education that make recipients capable of delivering critical skill sets for modern business. And, in many cases, these skill sets were as critical as those supplied through science disciplines.

Or, to quote a university president, "The liberal arts do not merely educate

our students in a set of specific skills, but facilitate the capacity to think critically and objectively; to reject can't in favor of intellectual honesty and candor; to bring problems and issues a wide and deep historical perspective and understanding; to speak clearly and cogently; to write with grace and maturity; to appreciate beauty; and to work and collaborate with others while maintaining intellectual independence and creativity."

Well said.

In fact I would argue – along with many leaders in modern business – that pursuing a liberal arts education demands a greater sense of risk and adventure than pursuing an education in the sciences. Fundamentally, those emerging with liberal arts degrees bring with them skills to function in a world bombarded with information. They not only help us stay connected to important information, they help us make sense of it.

And, the reality is that I have *seen* how a liberal arts education has provided tremendous benefit to the businesses that define PepsiCo. So, to modify a sentiment from Mark Twain, "I am not going to let my schooling interfere with my education"!

I'd like to show how a \$27 billion global company like PepsiCo uses liberal arts education to connect with *people*, both inside and outside of the company.

I'll start with a look from the inside out – toward consumers. They are, after all, our reason for being.

If you look at what makes our business *successful*, it's not about analyzing the numbers and engineering our products.

Fundamentally, our success begins with an understanding of people – in our case consumers. We've got to gain deep insights about our consumers – how they think, behave, and communicate. It's only when we have such insight that we can develop products and programs that will help our businesses grow.

Let me put this in context with our brands. Each of you has a reaction, or connection, to our trademarks. Names like Quaker, Tropicana, Pepsi-Cola, Gatorade, and Frito-Lay evoke – hopefully – a positive feeling from you. We work very hard to connect you – as consumers – with our brands on a very personal level. To do this – and do it well – we rely on many people who have a liberal arts education.

Knowing what consumers want – and what they're *going* to want – means that we have to understand everything from color preferences to their social connections. Who, and what, influences their decisions on what to eat for breakfast? What snacks do they prefer? What packaging do they like? How do they define convenience? These are all questions we tackle every day.

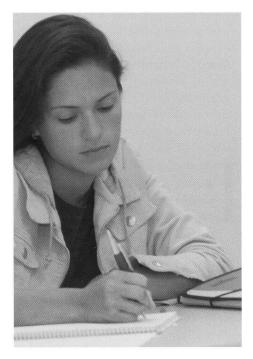
The employees who help us answer these questions include marketers and Research & Development professionals, who often have skills and experiences gained through multiple liberal arts backgrounds.

For example, when I say Research & Development, you might think of men and women in white lab coats with PhDs in chemistry. We have those kinds of employees, but our R&D also relies heavily on our ability to extract deep consumer insights directly from people. It means, for example, asking the right questions, and asking them in the right way. If there were ever a need for people who know psychology and sociology, it's here.

But there are many other liberal arts disciplines that can help as well. History majors, for example, help us use the past to make sense of our present and future opportunities. People with social science and social work – just to use some of your fields of study – can help us understand who influences whom. In the process, they help us crack an ever-changing code that helps us connect with consumers.

Once we know what consumers want, we're challenged to break through the clutter of information, and *communicate* with them effectively.

Anne Morrow Lindbergh once said of communications, "Good communication is as stimulating as black coffee and just as



hard to sleep after."

It would be a better quote if she'd chosen Pepsi (maybe caffeine free), but the sentiment is clear about the importance of communication. Particularly in our industry.

Think about it.

Packaging is a form of communication and requires an understanding of art, of graphic design, and of color, to convey specific attributes of the product and brand.

When you walk into a retail outlet, somebody had to think about what to communicate with you, as a consumer, in that environment. Point-of-purchase communications requires an understanding of human behavior and of communication discipline.

Then there's advertising. Putting a clear, concise message into 15 seconds, 30 seconds, or 60 seconds of television advertising isn't as easy as many would believe. Here again, the liberal arts background often applies in a premium way. Communication, psychology, philosophy, even the classics provide wonderful platforms for the development of effective advertising – in all its forms.

And what about just talking with con-

sumers? We have people who employ communication skills every day of the year through our 1-800 consumer response lines. When consumers have questions, complaints, ideas, and words of praise, it takes people with skills in communications, psychology, and foreign language to convey the right impression about how we value our consumers.

We use communication to influence thinking about our company. To convince shareholders and potential shareholders to buy our stock. To convince Wall Street analysts to recommend our company. To help members of the press to understand our story. To convince retail customers to give us more space on the shelf.

Looking inside our company, we depend on people with communication skills to help us connect with our own employees, on everything from how the business is doing to what's new with their compensation and benefits programs. And it's part psychology there, too, believe me.

The list of communication needs goes on and on, and so does the list of liberal arts degrees that can help our people succeed in their efforts to inform and persuade – degrees in English, communication arts, and journalism.

Businesses are beginning to realize that technical expertise is easier to teach than the interpretation or communication skills that humanities students have.

And in successful businesses that run fast and furiously, there's a premium value placed on people who have these communication skill sets walking in the door.

So that's the 30,000-foot view of how we at PepsiCo use liberal arts education to be successful – through collecting consumer insight, developing products, creating packaging, and communicating clearly with consumers and employees alike.

Let me now turn to some very personal experiences and observations I have on this whole topic. I grew up a Brahmin in South India, a community that strongly believed that you were someone only if you go and get a science degree – prima-



rily engineering or medicine, but chemistry, math, zoology, botany are acceptable too! The only people who went into liberal arts, the common belief went, were those who did not get into the science program of their choice. You see, in India you pick your major when you enter college. (Sometimes I think your major was picked for you before you were even conceived!)

Dutifully, I majored in chemistry, physics, and math and went on to get a business degree in finance. I came to this country 25 years ago, a young student at Yale, and realized quickly that I had a great education and was a fairly intelligent student, but I was not as well rounded as I needed to be – especially to get ahead in the highly complex world of Corporate America.

I could integrate, differentiate, and write equations with ease. I could read math and chemistry books where – literally – the only words on the page were "chapter," "if," and "therefore." The rest of the page consisted of squiggles and numbers. But, write an interesting, engag-

ing essay on something as simple as "my early experiences as a foreign student at Yale"? I just couldn't pull it off! My work read like a neatly packed list of mathematical equations – perfectly logical, crystal clear, but definitely something no one would read!

I saw everything in black and white – could not understand that shades of grey, in fact, predominated. You see, I had never studied philosophy or psychology – subjects that thrive on *interpretation*, not just linear logic.

I was interested in getting to know my fellow students who came from many countries of the world. But, to truly understand what made them tick, I realized I needed to understand a lot more of the cultures from which they came, the history and sometimes even the geography of their countries of origin.

And, it dawned on me that my future as a corporate executive was critically dependent on acquiring a set of skills that you probably know well – skills that are acquired by those who study the liberal arts.

I am not denouncing my science back-

ground. I am proud of it. It gave me a foundation in math – a subject that I believe is wired into your brain by age 20 or never at all! It taught me the values of scientific theory. Had I not chosen a career in Corporate America, it may have even produced another Louis Pasteur or a starving chemist! Who knows what the outcome would have been?

But I am now deeply aware, and respectful of, those who major in the liberal arts. I am actively encouraging my daughter, a sophomore in college, to consider pursuing an English major. And through a lot of reading, I have been actively working to enhance my knowledge of philosophy, psychology, and a lot of history.

Over the past 10-15 years, it is this expanded liberal arts knowledge that I have acquired that has made me a better mother, better corporate executive, and overall, just a better rounded and more interesting person.

So, I'd like to close by sharing my appreciation for the educational honor you've been kind enough to bestow upon me today. It has tremendous personal importance to me.

While I have two master's degrees, the expectation in my family growing up was that we – my brothers, sisters and cousins – would receive a PhD. It's simply a part of our family's expectations, and our culture's values on achieving the highest education possible. Just as important is the responsibility for passing that knowledge on to future generations.

My brother achieved that goal, receiving a PhD from MIT, and clearly is considered the most "enlightened one" in the family.

While achieving master's degrees was hard work, I want to tell you that in reality not receiving a PhD in my family is viewed as an unattained goal, a bit of a disappointment.

So, you see, this honorary doctorate

enables me to fulfill a very personal and important goal (and keep up with my brother).

Oliver Wendell Holmes once said, "A moment's insight is sometimes worth a life's experience."

In the tradition of sharing knowledge, and especially in this place of learning, I think it's appropriate to offer my "moment's insight," if you'll indulge me. It's simply this: stay on this path of learning.

Gain wisdom. Learn all you can, every day. Build your own diversity in knowledge and continue to show the world how liberal arts studies help create the fabric of humanity — and, if you so choose, of modern business.

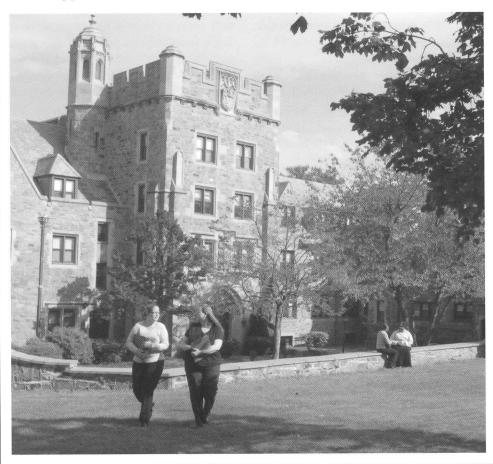
Regardless of where your careers take you, I know of no better formula for success – and no more noble mission – than to make learning a lifelong pursuit, both personally and professionally.

As liberal arts candidates, you've chosen a path that inherently has a greater sense of risk and adventure. Congratulations on taking that important leap of faith. A famous educator once said, "The traditional mission of the liberal arts has been to develop people who can think independently, ask significant questions, research, analyze, weigh ideas, draw logical conclusions, put forth sound arguments, and be open to life-long learning. These are precisely the skills business and industry wants."

He's right. In short, the pursuit of a liberal arts education is the epitome of learning how to learn.

That's why I believe that liberal arts candidates are far from any road to starvation, and no death knell has been sounded. While those headlines I posed earlier are provocative, the answers to them are hardly controversial. To the contrary, the only bell tolling is for a celebration of humanities.

It's been a privilege sharing these thoughts with you. Thank you for your time and attention, and thank you for this special honorary degree. It is, indeed, an honor.



RICH TRADITIONS, CURRENT VISIONS OF LIBERAL EDUCATION

Bridget Puzon, OSU

Editor, *Liberal Education*Association of American Colleges and Universities

o begin, we must ask: is the question, "What are the liberal arts?" or is it "How do we educate civilized human beings?" These are timely concerns in an era of mass higher education at the opening of the 21st century. Asking the right question is important.

The story of the American Catholic liberal education, liberal arts colleges, and the unique story of the broad availability of college education for women in Catholic women's colleges — an unprecedented event in this country — represents one stage in the long history of liberal arts education. I want to contextualize our discussion today with a quick recall of some history, though by no means reflecting every development.

The tradition of liberal arts, as we know, starts with the Greeks and wends its way through Western history to the present. From the outset, ideas of the nature of a civilized human being and of civilization itself, fell into two different strains that come to us as two ideals of education: the logos as the idea, the philosopher as the ideal and the logos as the word, the orator, with leadership as the ideal. These two continue as two strains in contemporary, sometimes heated, and now politicized debate about liberal arts education the rationale pursuit of knowledge on the one hand and the public arts of speech and persuasion on the other: ratio and oratio. These understandings of liberal arts constitute the poles around which educational models in the West developed.

Rather than speak of the long and complex development of the liberal arts



HOW DO WE EDUCATE A
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with its various changes in emphasis, I'll pick up the history in its crossing the Atlantic, adapting to the American envi-

ronment, the humanist tradition or English model, notably at Harvard in 1636. Permutations of the liberal arts tradition continued. The 18th century enlightenment affected 19th century U.S. higher education in a split from the liberal arts in the founding of the empirically oriented research university. So we've had a new idea of what undergraduate education would be.

Also at that time, late 19th century, the growth of state-supported public institutions posed a threat to the residential undergraduate liberal arts model. In 1915, the Association of American Colleges, as it was then known, was founded to strengthen the threatened liberal arts, largely church-related residential colleges. We have inherited all these in what is well known and unique to the United States, the diversity of types of institutions.

At the end of the Second World War, and here we approach our own era, the next major adaptation saw universities and colleges opening their doors to adults, the returning GIs. The forms of undergraduate education we know now directly flow from that move toward accessibility. Access would eventually extend to racial minorities and doors once closed would be opened to women. The title of a 1973 book expresses it well: *The Transition from Elite to Mass to Universal Education*, which is what we are approaching now.

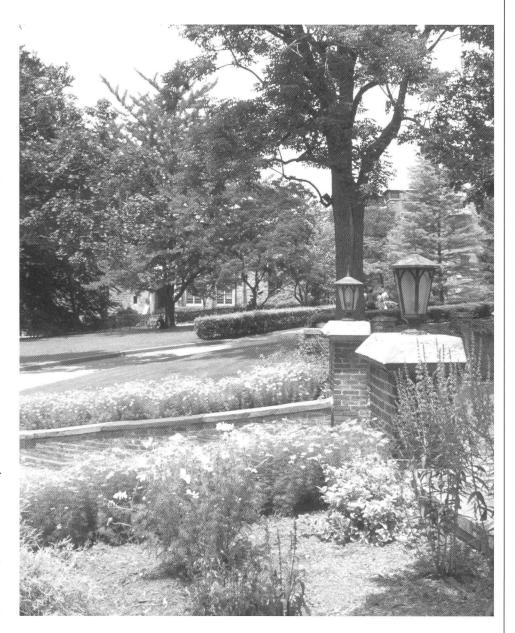
How do we educate a civilized human being? The culture wars over undergraduate education of our time are not new. The tension between the original two understandings, ratio and oratio, continues. Should learning be for personal enlightenment and a canon of disciplines? Or should it have pragmatic purposes with new curricula and pedagogies that engage public issues?

At the Association of American Colleges and Universities, practical liberal education that is intentional, integrative, and engaged is how we describe it. We distinguish between the liberal arts as referring to specific disciplines, summarized as humanities, social sciences and sciences, and liberal education, a more encompassing term, a philosophy of education intended to liberate the mind from ignorance, empower the individual, and cultivate social responsibility.

The Association's singular mission is the promotion of liberal education, liberal not in a political sense but in the humanist tradition — a liberal education for all undergraduates no matter what their major, no matter what the program. AACU's latest publication on liberal education is called *Greater Expectations: A New Vision for Learning as the Nation Goes to College.* It develops ideas for 21st century higher education. The emphasis of *Greater Expectations* is on both intellectual and pragmatic capacities and outcomes of learning and on infusing liberal education into any subject or major.

United States higher education, diverse in its form, is further distinguished from that of other countries in that it is not regulated in content or governance by a national ministry of education. Rather, United States higher education prides itself on academic freedom and the autonomy and self-regulation by which it focuses its resources with accountability to peers through voluntary accreditation of the institution and peer accountability in disciplinary societies and internal peer review.

How the Catholic college developed in this environment provides a history within this broader historical picture. Because of its status within American society, Catholic higher education, with its largely first-generation college student body, had, from the beginning, pragmatic motives



in the formation of its distinguishing identity and vision. By the 1950s, Catholic liberal arts colleges were self-confident in the niche they filled. In that decade, John Tracy Ellis articulated the ideal of a Catholic intellectual in the centuries-old Catholic intellectual tradition. And his talks and essays challenged Catholic colleges to reclaim that legacy of learning.

Catholic colleges flourished and produced men and women committed to liberal arts education, a generation of educational leaders who are now approaching retirement. But ours is a time of massifi-

cation, with over 60 percent of high school graduates going on to post-secondary education. Already around the world, we see national economies dependent on an educated work force taking up the banner of universal education. That is one aspect of globalization made possible by electronic mediation.

Where are we now? How do we educate a civilized human being? And what is the state of liberal education at this time? Our three panelists will help us unpack the implications of liberal education in the 21st century.

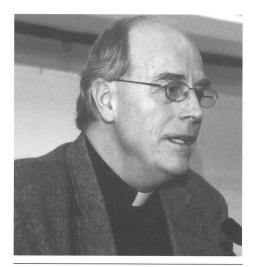
A CATHOLIC VISION FOR THE LIBERAL ARTS

REVEREND JAMES L. HEFT, SM University Professor of Faith and Culture CHANCELLOR, UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON

t is a privilege to participate in The College of New Rochelle's centenary celebration for two reasons. First, I've always felt a deep sense of appreciation for the Ursuline sisters whom I first encountered as my very best grade school teachers at St. Jerome's parish in Cleveland, Ohio. Second, Catholic colleges like New Rochelle have kept alive a Catholic sensibility through the teaching of the liberal arts. Harold Bloom, the prolific literary critic who recently donated his personal library and artwork to St. Michael's College in Winooski, Vermont, told The New York Times that, and I quote him, "With rare exceptions the universities and the colleges in the English-speaking world that have sustained some sense of literature as a matter of powerful cognition and extraordinary aesthetic beauty tend to be Roman Catholic institutions."

The liberal arts include more than literature to be sure. But to treasure narrative as a source of aesthetic beauty and powerful insight into human reality is to understand important dimensions of Catholic intellectual traditions; namely, the incarnation and sacramental sensibility. In the brief time that I have, I wish to look at our topic from three angles: First, I wish to identify four common misunderstandings of Catholic colleges and the liberal arts. Second, I will clarify some of the distinctiveness of Catholic intellectual traditions. And, third, I will briefly address three challenges we face today in sustaining and deepening distinctive Catholic academic traditions.

First, some of the common misunder-



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standings. People who say that to be a good Catholic college or university one must first be a good university or college contribute to the first common misunderstanding. This way of formulating the issue presupposes that the shape of a good college is already given, or a good university is already given. And that being Catholic will provide, if you will, a certain seasoning to the main dish. Perhaps some required course in philosophy and theology. For these people, being Catholic is only an adjective while being a university is a noun.

This way of speaking creates a misunderstanding, I believe, because there are many institutional forums of universities and even colleges, not all of which are compatible with the Catholic intellectual vision. For example, a university that in reality is a technical institute with no liberal arts cannot be a Catholic university. A research university that does not seek to integrate knowledge but which promotes specialization through disciplines that never intersect cannot be a Catholic university.

A liberal arts college that promotes the liberal arts as a way of deciding what kind of person one wants to be, or as the last and best way of developing a person's fullest human potential, does indeed do a very good thing. However, at a Catholic college, the liberal arts are also, and even more, about deciding one's identity and developing one's potential within the richer context of discovering one's calling and dedicating one's self to God and to others.

A second common misunderstanding is to reduce the liberal arts to an intellectual and spiritual formation detached from a specific religious tradition. The current growth of the various forms of religious fundamentalism is outstripped

by the rapidly growing number of person who describe themselves as spiritual but not religious. People who say they believe but they don't belong. For Catholics, spirituality and religious tradition are like Siamese twins. If you separate them both die. Understood in their proper relationship, religious community traditions and religious practices provide the most consistently rich soil for spiritual growth.

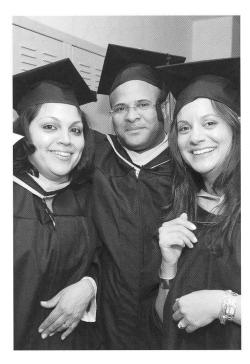
A third common misunderstanding today of the liberal arts can be traced in large part to the recent ascendancy of politicized forms of modernism, especially in the humanities and the social sciences. In these perspectives, a certain basic hermeneutics of suspicion transforms these fields of study into privilege vehicles for emphasizing the individual over the community, gender over shared humanity, power over knowledge, and autobiography over any shared history.

Students socialized in this approach to the liberal arts often come to think of religious traditions only as, at least in the Catholic world, oppressive male-dominated constructs more interested in control than contrition. I'm not saying there's no truth here. But I'm saying, if that's the only perspective, then we have done a disservice.

Notice I referred a moment ago to politicized forms of modernism. Some emphases of modernism actually underscore the Catholic emphasis on free will and the dignity of each individual person.

Fourth and finally, liberal education can be understood as having no relevance to the practical arts or to professional education. I'm not thinking here of the argument that some mistakenly believe John Henry Newman made for a liberal education; namely, that to be truly liberal it must have no use beyond itself. Rather I'm thinking of those many universities and even colleges where serious integration of the curriculum is absent.

In summary then, the four common misunderstandings of liberal education from a Catholic point of view are: first, to see it simply as an add on to an already



given secular institutional structure; second, as a spiritual formation apart from any specific religious tradition; third, as a vehicle for politicized forms of modernism; and, fourth, as incompatible with professional education.

What is a Catholic vision of the liberal education? Current literature on Catholic higher education provides a number of descriptions of Catholic intellectual traditions. This afternoon, I wish to single out only three characteristics briefly.

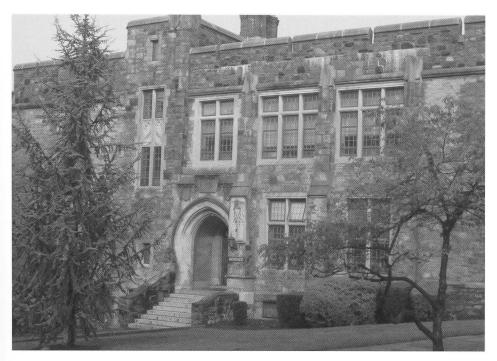
First, and most obviously, Catholic intellectual traditions value traditions. If, for example, Catholics were to rely solely on scripture, as do some Protestants, centuries of philosophy and theology, to say nothing of art, music, literature, and architecture, would be removed from the list of essential resources for understanding God, enriching one's faith, and expanding one's appreciation of faithinspired human creativity.

Moreover, to emphasize tradition is to underscore the importance of human reason. A confidence in human reason, though not without its flaws, opens up Catholics for dialogue with those of other faiths and even of no faith precisely in order to learn whatever will contribute to a deeper sense of the truth of things. Notre Dame's Dean of College of Arts and Letters, Mark Roach, explains that for the Catholic intellectual, "Every position is to be entertained and weighed in the service of the truth. This diminution of ourselves and this sense of the transcendent, our desire for new perspectives through reason, and quite simply the elevation of the value of all persons, leads a Catholic university, among other things, to welcome persons of diverse faiths."

And finally, since in the Catholic tradition reason and faith are intimately related, there is no part of the curriculum that is not informed in some way by philosophical, ethical, or theological perspectives. In professional education, for example such as nursing, the Christian vision of the human person prevents care for the sick from being reduced to the use of technologies and the dispensation of drugs. In the study of history, the presence, forms, and vitality of various religions are studied as an integral part of the human story. The teaching of philosophy at a Catholic college will not ignore the vital relationship between philosophy and theology, even if much of modern philosophy seems determined to sever that relationship.

In other words, at a Catholic college or university, Catholic intellectual traditions by the way they value tradition and reason will affect all aspects of the curriculum and even determine in some instances which majors to offer.

Secondly, Catholic intellectual traditions are rooted in specific beliefs and practices. Most fundamentally, the incarnation, the trinity, and the Eucharist. Even prior to the word becoming flesh, that is prior to the incarnation, the doctrine of creation affirms that all that is is good because it is from God. Moreover, all human beings are created in the image and likeness of God, an image whose dignity is made most clear in the person of Jesus, the human face of God. But Jesus, though fully divine and human, is not all there is of God.



We also affirm with other Christians the existence of the trinity: the father, the son, and Holy Spirit. The Christian godhead, the trinity, is a community of persons. Catholic Christians built community through the sacraments, primarily through the Eucharist. Ordinary bread and wine through the action of the Holy Spirit become the body and blood of Jesus. Building community, the breaking of the bread, and the laying down of one's life for others are paradigmatic practices for Catholics, or they should be. Through a sacramental sense, the extraordinary is found within the ordinary. A sacramental vision drawing upon personal discipline, selfless sacrifice, and genuine thanks reveals God's presence in our midst and in all things and gives direction to our lives.

Given this Catholic vision of the life of faith and community, a spiritual but not religious approach is inadequate. Why? Because it is invariably individualist, typically relativistic, and rarely sacramental. Catholic beliefs and practices ground the liberal arts in a communal search for the truth and lifelong dedication to the common good. Liberal education in a Catholic college is not about deciding who you want to be but rather discover-

ing whom we have been called to be. The key question is not who we are but to whom do we belong. Such discoveries are not a passive acceptance of a divine given but rather the discovery of a vocation that invites persons to lay down their lives for others.

To cite Mark Roach again, "Catholicism brings to the liberal arts ideal a strong existential component. At a Catholic college, students pursue theology not as the distant interested science of religious phenomena but as faith seeking understanding. They study history and the classics in order to learn not simply about the past but also from the past. Students employ the quantitative tools of the social sciences not simply as a formal exercise with mathematical models, but in order to develop sophisticated responses to pressing and complex social issues."

While in many universities scholarship often becomes antiquarian, disenchanted, and even cynical, in Catholic colleges and universities the religiously grounded intellectual tradition renders scholarship, and should render scholarship and learning, more existential and more connected to the real needs of individuals in the larger community. The presence of the members

of religious communities who have founded so many of the Catholic colleges and universities in this country have made it more obvious that an intimate link should exist between scholarship and life, between thinking and living, and between faith and the intellectual life. Their diminished numbers today should be a serious concern for all who value Catholic intellectual traditions.

Third, and finally, Catholic intellectual traditions seek to integrate knowledge. If, as I have said above, all that exists comes from God, an affirmation that Christians, Muslims, and Jews make in common, then there ought to be connections between all that is studied since all that is comes from a single source. Even if most pre-Civil War colleges in the United States were intellectually rather sleepy, they nonetheless made genuine efforts to integrate what was taught. The president, typically a member of the clergy, taught all seniors a course that brought together all that had been learned in the previous three years.

In today's colleges and universities, the challenge of integrating learning is even more difficult than in the antebellum college for the simple reason that there is much more to learn. And most of it is located within discrete disciplines shaped by different methodologies. Catholic colleges that value liberal education resist the fragmentation of knowledge. Were we to seek answers by employing only certain already established methodologies, we would run the risk of constricting our thinking in such a way that we ask only those questions that we believe we can answer - or that we have the means to answer. In other words, we will ask only sensible questions whose root to an answer is governed by agreed upon methodologies.

I worry that in our universities and colleges there is the danger that we will reverse the traffic between question and answer so as to permit only such questions to be asked as we already possess predetermined methodologies for answer-

ing, cutting the agenda of questions down to the shape and size of our given routines for answering them. Were we to ask only such questions as we can answer then we spell the death not only of the liberal arts but also of all our disciplines. And certainly the death of a Catholic college that presumes to ask even unanswerable questions of God.

In summary then, Catholic intellectual traditions emphasize the importance of tradition and reason, embody a faith tradition that shapes intellectual perspectives, and seek to integrate all learning.

Finally, three contemporary challenges. I could reduce the major contemporary challenge to one that expresses itself in a college on three levels. The challenge is the powerful commercialization of American culture. A friend of mine is fond of describing the United States as an economy with a culture loosely attached. The danger of commercialization expresses itself in a college in at least three ways: among administrators, among faculty, and among students.

First, it expresses itself among administrators, including members of boards of trustees, who no longer understand what the distinctive mission of an educational institution, such as a college, ought to be. Instead, many of them think in terms of models taken from the business world models that will maximize revenue, bureaucratize all transactions, speak of faculty as employees and students as customers, and believe that if an institution can successfully brand itself - the latest fad - then it can also quantify all the important outcomes of a college education. Of course, any college that repeatedly cannot balance its budget will cease to exist. As they say, "No margin, no mission." But I wish to stress here that the mission is about much more than a good margin and that managerial expertise is no substitute for academic leadership.

Second, those faculty who think only of their own discipline and career advancement, who are not interested in seeking connections between different fields of knowledge and who think that intellectual traditions rooted in faith traditions are irrelevant, if not pernicious to the work of the academy, constitute a formidable challenge. And since in the end it is only the faculty who can secure the Catholic identity of a college and determine what kind of identity it is and what its form of academic expression should be, then it is crucial that we have not just scholars who are Catholic but Catholic scholars on our faculty. Hiring and developing Catholic scholars is one of the greatest needs of the present. Non-Catholic faculty are also important members of the college community because, as Alistair Macintyre reminds us, they contribute their own excellence to the learning process and help Catholics remember that the secular calling of the university, qua university, is shared with non-Catholics.

And finally, students today present their own challenge. Newman once remarked of the laity that church would look foolish without them. A college without students is not a college. It may be a research institute, but it will lack the vitality that arises when faculty and students truly engage each other in the pursuit of truth. Just as administrators and

faculty can be influenced by our consumer culture, students can become so focused on acquiring marketable skills and landing a good job that they see no market value in the liberal arts. Catholic colleges, administrators, and faculty must help such students see beyond what they want to what, in fact, they most need – an integrated educational experience rooted in a religious tradition that will sustain them in whatever profession they choose.

Allow me to conclude by saying simply that an intimate and distinctive relationship exists between liberal education and Catholic intellectual traditions and that I am personally grateful that a college like New Rochelle has continued to pass on, promote, and develop that relationship.

St. Angela, foundress of the Ursulines, encouraged the members of her Order to carry on steadfastly and faithfully the work they had undertaken. Mother Irene Gill, the foundress of the College, undertook a far-sighted work when 100 years ago she sought the charter for the first Catholic college for women in New York State. And ever since, the Ursulines and lay colleagues have joined hands to carry on steadfastly. I hope they will continue for the next 100 years.



STAYING THE COURSE: The Liberal Arts in American Catholic Higher Education Three Case Studies

Dorothy Brown
Professor of History Emerita, Georgetown University

hile we meet to celebrate 100 years of the rich history and leadership of The College of New Rochelle today, I am going to follow the lead of Alice Gallin, OSU in her fine study, Negotiating Identity and begin in the 1960s for this exploration of the liberal arts in American Catholic higher education. The 1960s was a great divide. Gallin observes that in 1960 the mission statements of the approximately 250 Catholic colleges and universities were not identical, "but they were almost interchangeable, in their commitment to liberal arts, character formation, and a sense of campus community that was openly proclaimed as rooted in their Catholic faith." It was the quiet before the storm.

The 1960s was marked by civil rights movements, student activism, marches and demonstrations against war, the sexual revolution, and then the women's movement. For American Catholics, in the decade of John F. Kennedy, Pope John the XXIII, and Vatican II, the 1960s marked the continuing move (in Andrew Greeley's words *From Margin to Mainstream*) away from the defensive wagon circling, so dominant at the beginning of the century, to issues of mission and identifying the "plus factor" of Catholic higher education in a time of dynamic change and competition.

To consider the contemporary Catholic university in the wake of Vatican II, Rev. Theodore Hesburgh, President of the University of Notre Dame and of the



THE BEST ASSURANCE THAT THE LIBERAL ARTS WILL REMAIN AT THE HEART OF OUR ENDEAVORS IS THE INTENSE DISCUSSION CURRENT ON EVERY CATHOLIC CAMPUS ON MISSION AND IDENTITY. THE LIBERAL ARTS HAVE BEEN ONE OF OUR DISTINGUISHING MARKS OF EXCELLENCE FROM THE BEGINNING.

International Federation of Catholic Universities, in July 1967, hosted a gathering of leaders of nine major Catholic universities at Land O' Lakes, Wisconsin. The participants set out ten identifying characteristics, beginning with a commit-

ment to excellence and an insistence on autonomy and academic freedom. Catholicism would be "perceptibly present" and "effectively operative." The presence would be most operative in the teaching and research of the theology faculty, who would engage others in dialogue, deepening "an awareness that there is a philosophical and theological dimension to most intellectual subjects." In the undergraduate curriculum, this "effective intellectual presence of the theological disciplines" would translate into a concern for ultimate questions: for the full human and spiritual development of the student, and a concern with social justice issues of race, peace, and poverty. The Catholic university would serve society and be the critical reflective intelligence of the church.

Yet each Catholic college and university founded by a religious congregation would also have to consider how Vatican II and the Land O' Lakes statements would be integrated in their programs consonant with the charism of their communities.

The Jesuit Education Association sponsored a workshop at Denver in 1969. As at Land O' Lakes, the delegates set out distinctive marks, in this instance, of the Jesuit "style" of Catholic education. Jesuit education would be open to experimentation, would accept provisional answers, seek a genuine ecumenism, and be able to bear a prophetic testimony to the crises of the times. Their Statement on Liberal Aims of Jesuit Higher Education defined liberal education as "one that prepares the

free person for a full and fruitful life in a free society. To foster that education the student must be placed at the center. Freshmen should be engaged on issues of keenest concern to them by the most exciting and creative faculty, but all students should be fully engaged in the shared search for truth and values, a search in which philosophy and theology were still central. The curriculum should balance general and specialized education; it should include non-Western studies, and respond to the student demand for relevance, immediacy, and involvement..." It was a long way from the prescribed classical curriculum in the liberal arts initiated in the 1790s at John Carroll's "academy on the Potomack," but it did reflect Ignatius's belief that Jesuit education should adapt to places, times, and persons.

To examine the impact of the dynamic changes in society, the church, and higher education from the 1960s, I will concentrate today on the curricular developments in the liberal arts in three pioneering Catholic universities and colleges: Georgetown, the oldest Catholic and oldest Jesuit university in America; the College of Notre Dame of Maryland (my alma mater), the Catholic college for women which granted the first baccalaureate degrees; and the Centennial celebrant, The College of New Rochelle, the first Catholic college for women in New York State. All three are instances of what strong leadership can do and of working for excellence while remaining true to their traditions and mission.

The year 1970 was a significant one for each of them. In 1970, the curriculum committee of Georgetown's College of Arts and Sciences presented its report to faculty. The appointed committee of faculty and students had begun its deliberations in 1967. It had reviewed Harvard's reform of its core, Brown's reduction of requirements, Stanford's use of freshman seminars taught by stars. All had reduced their requirements in general education. Georgetown followed suit and the reduc-

tions were substantial. Only ten courses were required. The privileged courses included two courses each in theology and philosophy. (In 1962, 20 hours of philosophy and 16 of theology had been required.) The members of the curriculum committee had consistently stressed the centrality of philosophy and theology. Just as insistently, the theologian and philosopher on the committee emphasized that their fields should not be seen as the only synthesizing disciplines. They should not be expected to bear the full weight of the identity question. Rounding out the general education requirements were two courses each in literature, mathematics or science, and the social sciences. (Physical education was dropped as a requirement for male students in 1969, though retained for the women students newly accepted into the College. It was the only curricular notice initially given to the introduction of women.) Put in place was a distribution model that was distinctive only for its insistence on philosophy and theology for all students.

The 1971-72 Bulletin reported the program changes. The College, it stated, continued the liberal arts tradition "by seeking to develop the student's ability to make judgments and to see relationships..." The new curriculum was flexible and stressed student responsibility and initiative, "yet is structured enough to give him an introduction to the different areas which reflect the different ways that a man thinks, knows, and creates." Accepting the "knowledge explosion" and the truism that not everything could be taught, the committee emphasized the how, the methodology of the disciplines, rather than broad coverage. The Ratio Studiorum and eloquentia perfecta were not mentioned.

The College of Notre Dame of Maryland and The College of New Rochelle, as they moved from academies to colleges, had as their models the pioneer women's colleges, Vassar, Wellesley, Bryn Mawr. But they were, of course, attentive to their Catholic identity. They were each founded to respond to the unmet need for Catholic higher education for Catholic women and to provide teachers for Catholic schools. Courses in religion were offered by priests, since women were not admitted to seminaries. Philosophy was increasingly offered by the sisters. Committed, like John Carroll and Georgetown, from their founding to excellence, the young colleges worked to credential their faculties and were among the first wave of colleges and universities accredited by the Middle States Association in the 1920s. (The College of New Rochelle had become the sixth largest Catholic college in terms of enrollment by 1926.)

In 1970, both the College of Notre Dame of Maryland and The College of New Rochelle faced challenges that were serious and compelled not only curricular discussions, but strategies of innovation and adaptation to ensure their survival. Both remained true to their founding to respond to the needs of women and to provide access and opportunity. Saint Angela Merici had urged her sisters, "Act, bestir yourselves. You will certainly see wonders." Mother Teresa Gerhardinger of the School Sisters of Notre Dame had exhorted the sisters she sent on mission, "Trust and dare."

At Notre Dame, the particular and immediate challenge was the decision of neighboring Loyola College and struggling Mt. St. Agnes College, founded by the Sisters of Mercy, to merge. In 1971, they would become one coed institution, Loyola College. Notre Dame, after long discussions with the other two institutions and internally with all of its constituencies, decided to cooperate but not to merge. The newly appointed president, Kathleen Feeley, SSND, stated once that decision was made "we never looked back." Enrollments dropped in 1971, and Feeley knew the college had to grow. First established was the continuing education program for returning adult women. Feeley then initiated a consideration of graduate programs, but happening to be

in Chicago on the weekend that Mundelein College (BVMs) launched its pioneering weekend college for working adults, Feeley saw the future. As she said, "she took the ball and ran." Notre Dame began the first weekend college in Maryland in 1975 for women and men. In the mid-1980s, graduate programs were offered in Administrative Science, Liberal Studies, and Adulthood and Aging, followed in the 1990s by highly successful graduate programs in Education.

In 1970, The College of New Rochelle's remarkable president, Dorothy Ann Kelly, OSU, began her tenure first as interim president and then, like Feeley, led the College for more than 20 years. You are familiar with this story – the decision, after extended discussion, not to "go coed" but to remain a women's college. New Rochelle also initiated a strategy of growth with new, innovative programs and schools: the creation of the Graduate School, the School of Nursing, the School of New Resources, and the renamed School of Arts and Sciences together formed The College of New Rochelle.

At both Notre Dame and New Rochelle, the new programs sustained the colleges. What have these successful initiatives meant for the liberal arts?

As at Georgetown, both New Rochelle and Notre Dame in their traditional women's colleges reduced the required courses in the core. In the 1960s, New Rochelle's women completed 136 semester hours for the baccalaureate. Included were four courses in theology and two in philosophy in the lower division with additional requirements in those fields in the junior/senior years. In the 1970s, 36 hours were still required in the humanities. The new core curriculum of the 1980s was, the Bulletin indicated, "designed to provide exposure to those areas of knowledge which are vital to a well-balanced preparation in the liberal arts." New Rochelle's mission statement, approved in 1981, states its "primary purpose is the intellectual development of persons through the maintenance of the highest standards of academic excellence and educational growth.... The College strives to articulate its academic tradition and religious heritage in ways that are consonant with the best contemporary understandings of both. It provides opportunities for spiritual growth in a contest of freedom and ecumenism." The Liberal Arts Core of 2003 contains interdisciplinary and skills-oriented courses, preparing students "to function usefully in a world that is multicultural, diverse, and interdependent."

Similarly, Notre Dame in the 1960s had required 16 semester hours in religion and 14 in philosophy. In 1971 the College reduced those requirements to two courses in each. This curriculum, the Bulletin noted, "has the stability of the liberal arts and flexibility of movement within them. Career preparation has been built into the liberal arts framework of courses." Clearly, on both campuses, curricular change had occurred but there was a continued stated commitment to a liberal arts degree program.

Yet, increasingly from the 1970s to the present, the greatest numbers of students are in the adult programs, in the weekend college, the School of New Resources, and in their graduate programs. What of the liberal arts curriculum for the adult learner?

The current website of the School of New Resources declares, "A liberal arts degree opens a world of opportunities." The statement that follows emphasizes that "liberal arts graduates possess the intellect, flexibility, and varied skills that enable them to adjust to future changes in the world and the workplace. In short, a degree in the liberal arts will prepare you for much more than just a job. It will prepare you for a lifetime." (More than two decades ago, I was a member of a special Middle States team sent to review the innovative program of SNR. I visited the campus sites of the School at Co-op City and in the South Bronx, met faculty, and looked at portfolios. I was clearly the member of the team, coming from a traditional liberal arts Jesuit university, to look for academic rigor. I found it in the

impressive work on file for each student and the obvious success of the graduates. Housekeeping workers had become social workers, and teachers' aides had become certified teachers. It was clearly a program that empowered.) The Core Program in the Liberal Arts in 2003 offers interdisciplinary seminars specifically designed for the adult learner, beginning with the seminar Experience, Learning and Identity and concluding with Ways of Knowing. It is a model program that embodies the essence of a liberal arts curriculum, identified by the Association of American Colleges. The core is "intentional, integrated, engaged." The liberal arts anchor this innovative program.

Notre Dame's approach has been to have one undergraduate degree and one faculty. The general education committee insisted that the adults in the weekend college would not only study philosophy, theology, math/science, literature, and social science but would also fulfill language and physical education requirements (albeit these could be fulfilled with a wellness course and a course in culture).

The most mission-centered of their graduate programs is, of course, the Master of Arts in Liberal Studies. The Bulletin for that program contains an eloquent affirmation of the liberal arts: "The Master of Arts in Liberal Studies is centered in a philosophical tradition that acknowledges the dignity of thought and the passion for knowledge and for life. When studied deeply, the liberal arts are essentially one, and reveal the hidden, coherent patterns of meaning in our shared experience. The liberal arts order the intellect, engage the heart, quicken the creative impulse, and awaken the spirit anew to the fullness of the possible in this place and time. Liberal learning transcends the limitations of our complex and fragmented world, yet roots us in our humanity. Education in the liberal arts is a way to embrace the wholeness of life.

"Liberal studies at Notre Dame is a contemporary expression of our timeless commitment to the principle that educa-



tion in the liberal arts is the most necessary and perfect education. We know that the persons we become, the way we think and live, are matters of extraordinary, even eternal consequence. The liberal arts invite us to a life of decisive and creative commitment."

Clearly, the liberal arts are to be cherished. They are the bedrock of the education at New Rochelle, Notre Dame, and Georgetown, but not unchallenged. The commitment of The College of New Rochelle and Notre Dame of Maryland to remain committed to women's education, particularly in their traditional day programs and to provide access and opportunity have brought each a more diverse student body, ethnically, racially, economically. Both institutions have remained student centered and exercise extraordinary care and respect for the individual student. Many of the 18-21-year-old students work and have their eye on future positions; the adults are on a fast track. The challenge is for all of them to experience the coherence of the liberal arts as a foundation for the life they will live and to be convinced that the required courses in the liberal arts are essential and not just something to "get over with."

At Georgetown, and its counterparts, the challenge, in a sense, is also demographic, but in this instance, it is in an increasingly diverse research faculty. In the wake of the major national reports of the 1980s on the alleged crisis in the American undergraduate curriculum that issued calls for coherence and integrity, Georgetown's Core Curriculum Committee addressed a question from the Provost: "Given Georgetown's Jesuit and Catholic tradition, its grounding in the liberal arts, and its commitment to intercultural education: What are the skills, knowledge, and wisdom every Georgetown graduate should have?" The committee in making its recommendations cited the difficulties faced: "It is precisely our uniqueness and our success that urge to the surface the realization that Georgetown, as a university which seeks to be Catholic, American, and Jesuit all at once, and to be these things late in the 20th century, and which in addition prides itself on a pluralistic faculty, faces the most serious issues of identity, purpose, and coherence." The committee insisted that the core "can see to it that questions of value and of person are centrally present in the curriculum in the only way that makes sense, namely as questions addressed by the major intellectual enterprises that constitute a university."

What are the reassuring signs that the liberal arts will continue at the center of the academic programs of Catholic colleges and universities? Two seem the most promising, the emphasis on assessment and the focus on mission and identity.

At Georgetown, the first lay dean of the college of arts and sciences (a graduate of a Catholic women's college) is working with our Center for New Designs in Learning and Scholarship and a group of faculty to examine learning in courses and in majors. What do they want their students to know; how can they best work together to achieve this; how can they assess this learning. The Dean has put resources into this study to underscore its importance - to keep the core of liberal arts strong and teaching concentrating on the active, engaged student that was central to Ratio Studiorum and to the best in American higher education.

While assessment holds promise of affirming the liberal arts in our curricula, the best assurance that the liberal arts will remain at the heart of our endeavors is the intense discussion current on every Catholic campus on mission and identity. The liberal arts have been one of our distinguishing marks of excellence from the beginning. The charism of the Ursulines, Jesuits, and School Sisters of Notre Dame has always included a commitment to "wholeness," to strong teaching in student-centered programs. The continuing challenge is to articulate and program the value added, the plus factor of the liberal arts in Catholic higher education. New Rochelle's history bodes well for the future.

LIBERAL ARTS: Core of Accreditation

Jean Morse
Executive Director
Middle States Commission on Higher Education

rom the earliest days of the Middle States Association, The College of New Rochelle has been and continues to be actively engaged in the Middle States Association. Many have served as evaluators, others have headed teams, served on task forces, always have been there to help their colleagues and to help us. One individual has chaired as many as 19 teams for us – above and beyond the call of duty. I am especially pleased that the College chose the liberal arts as the focus of its celebration.

Liberal arts may be the most important part of a college education. But it's also the most at risk right now, because it's hard to show whether certain learning goals have occurred, and it's hard to relate them to student goals, like job placement. I would argue today that the liberal arts have been the bedrock of accreditation for over a hundred years, but the definition and application have evolved, and it's especially important to defend the liberal arts now, because of public unrest for higher education and especially issues being raised during the current reauthorization of the Higher Education Act by Congress.

If we are not able to explain to the public what we mean by liberal arts, how we know that students have learned them, and why they are important, we are at risk for having the liberal arts undermined by simplistic tests of accountability that will put the emphasis on career readiness and very basic skills, instead of liberal arts.

Of course, accreditation does not



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require a particular concentration in particular subjects for all colleges, but we do embody basic liberal arts skills in our general education requirement and teaching those is essential to being treated as a college of higher education. Even within an institution, it may be the general education requirement that separates a college degree from the increasing array of certificates and non-credit programs.

If we follow the AACU definition of a liberal education as being general education, plus in-depth study in at least one field, then our accreditation standards fully encompass liberal education, especially if we use the AACU definition of empowering individuals, liberating the mind from ignorance, cultivating social responsibility, and providing a way of studying by confronting important issues.

In fact, our own accreditation definition of general education is not in some ways all that different from the historic definition of the *artis liberalis* if one equates arithmetic with geometry, the old definition with math skills, grammar from the old definition with writing, rhetoric with communication skills, logic with analytical thinking. And if you just throw in at that point information literacy and technological competence, you have our modern definition for accreditation of general education.

Sister Bridget gave a history of the liberal arts and mentioned how it had become weaker over the years and had needed bolstering. From the point of view of the same history for accreditation, it has always been core. It's always been

there, and we've always relied on it to define college. So, as has been noted, until the Civil War and the Industrial Revolution, colleges in the United States were fairly small. They were often religiously based and their curricular varied accordingly. But they did have the elemental components that we've talked about of general education and that was a very important part of them.

After the Civil War and especially with the Industrial Revolution and the explosion of the American economy, there really was a change in post-secondary education. It wasn't clear any more what was the core. At that point, some of the betterestablished colleges got together, started the Middle States Association, and said we want to agree on what is at the core of a college education. The core of that was liberal arts. They even had a single curriculum that they all shared, and that was the basis of transferring credits. That was the beginning of accreditation.

As was mentioned, later in the 19th century, everyone became enamored of the German model, the research university. Often that involved a lot of specialized research departments, but often they were pasted onto the underlying undergraduate program, which is different from what was done in Europe where you go straight into your specialty. So, the liberal arts still continued in a college as the heart of what was going on there. That preserved the importance of the liberal arts, and it remained the fundamental element for membership in Middle States.

Around that time, a lot of specialized accreditors began because there was so much specialization of the research universities. What we did as regional accreditors was develop a checklist approach, instead of a single curriculum. That allowed more diversity in the curricula, which was happening anyway. Then because of the GI Bill after World War II – all the money coming from the federal government – and the enormous expansion in the 1960s of different kinds of education – community colleges, adult



education – we needed something very broad to encompass all of those kinds of education. We went to something called the self-study. But still for us, liberal arts was the core.

I think that now, more than ever, we need core values to distinguish higher education from other post-secondary education. We need to remind ourselves what we mean by a person who is educated and not just trained vocationally. That leads back to the issue that I mentioned earlier about the public and legislative pressure and how it could affect the liberal arts.

I'm sure you've all been following the big issue right now – the cost of higher education. Congressman Boehner has prepared this very dramatic chart that shows how much faster the cost of education has gone up than the cost of living. A book recently published by Ron Ehrenberg points out that this was true throughout the 20th century, so why is it suddenly a problem. Ehrenberg's thesis is that although education was going up at a higher rate than the cost of living, so were most American salaries, so they could

absorb it. But, in the 1980s, that ceased to be true, so education became a larger and larger proportion of the family budget and that has led to some of the resentment that we see today.

A secondary area of public pressure is the concern with accountability. I don't think anybody really knows what they mean by that, but everybody thinks it's a really good thing. They want to go home and tell their constituents that they have done it. Some of the proposals have included conditioning accreditation on reaching certain numerical goals, such as graduation rates and job placement rates, requiring different standards for the accreditation of distance learning from other learning, requiring full disclosure of entire self-studies and team reports. These are documents that institutions do to examine their soul and try to improve and have some confidential things in them.

What accreditors are trying to do in the midst of all this – and actually a few years ago, sort of anticipating it – is to get out the message that what we think and what higher education thinks accounta-

bility should be about is what students learn and that is the job of higher education and not of the government. We've actually hired a lobbyist in connection with this reauthorization that's going on right now. The messages that we are trying to get across from the higher education community are that higher education was responsive to these kinds of needs and has proposed legislation to show that the way to measure success of student learning is to concentrate on what's in students' heads and that the accreditors have adopted new standards that really emphasize that. Numerical measures should be disclosed to the public, but they should not be absolute measures of quality. They should be considered by accreditors as part of overall accomplishment within the context of each institution's mission.

Finally, we've included proposals on areas such as transfer of credits, distance learning, public disclosure, that we perceive to be the key issues. I have a feeling those issues are going to change and we will be responding to those as well.

So what does all this mean for the liberal arts? I think that first it means that higher education and accreditation must define, must deliver, on our promises. Colleges not only have to define and assess liberal arts student learning and other types of learning but they also need to define and clarify their institutional goals and get those across to the public.

Secondly, I think that we have to deliver on the new commitment to expanding the liberal arts and modernizing it. The AACU, the American Association of Colleges and Universities, in the publication *Greater Expectations* relates the liberal arts to job skills and to lifelong skills. They argue that the liberal arts now include job-related skills, such as technology expertise, which I've mentioned is also now in accreditation standards.

And, finally, we have to try to show how the liberal arts are valuable to college graduates. Vocational accreditors now say that if they place graduates in a good job, in their chosen field, at good salaries, they have met students' needs. They measure and report their results. It is, of course, true that job placement is a very important goal of most colleges, but it cannot dwarf the other goals embodied by the liberal arts. So, in short, the liberal arts have always been the foundation of what higher education is.

Colleges must continue to analyze and rethink what liberal arts mean in our society. Once our goals are clear, colleges have the responsibility to clarify their student learning and institutional goals. As a higher education community, we have the opportunity and responsibility to reinforce the central role of the liberal arts, and accreditation is wholly committed to retaining liberal arts general education skills as the heart of the definition of higher education.

I'd like to end with a personal note. I trained as a lawyer. I practiced corporate law for 18 years, and then I did a complete career change. I put it behind me and went into higher education adminis-

tration because it appealed to me. I could not have done that without the education I had had in the liberal arts - being able to look inside myself and find something besides the professional training, to think that I had something else that I could develop. Many years after graduating from college - and I had a liberal arts education - I wrote to the president of the college, knowing how presidents always receive complaints and thinking she would like something nice. I wrote, "I want you to know that after all these years really that education took hold. It was so important to me and thank you very much." I enclosed a contribution. I thought that she would write back and say thank you very much for the compliment. Thank you very much for the contribution. But she didn't. She sent my letter back, and on it she had handwritten, "keep using it."

I am sure that you all will continue to use your liberal arts education throughout life and that it will serve you very well.



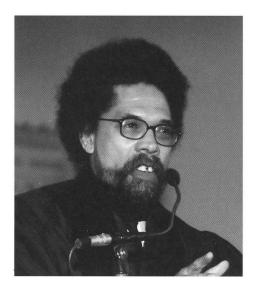
CORNEL WEST WELCOMED TO CELEBRATE DIVERSITY OF CNR COMMUNITY

Cornel West
Class of 1942 University Professor of Religion, Princeton University

hat does it mean to a community drawn from diversity diversity of race, class, religion, gender and much more? The answers were the subject of the third in a series of six Centennial academic convocations held at the College this year. Entitled "At Our Heart: Diversity," the convocation in February featured one of the country's most prominent public intellectuals, Dr. Cornel West. Currently the Class of 1942 University Professor of Religion at Princeton University, Dr. West has prodded and provoked the conscience of America for nearly two decades to recognize the supreme value of human diversity.

The hundreds of faculty, staff, students, and alumnae/i that filled Holy Family Chapel and the Castle Parlors to hear Dr. West's electrifying address, which combined theology, scholarship, and activism, were indeed prodded and provoked as he asked them to consider the type of person they were when they "take off the mask," encouraging them to examine themselves, their work, their society, their civilization.

Describing September 11 as a pivotal moment in the history of the United States, as "an attack on all the people of this country without regard to race, religion, age, color, or creed or national origin," Dr. West said, "the people of this country were subject to acts of random violence and hatred," something, he said, African-Americans have experienced in this country for 244 years.



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HEAVEN BEHIND.

Encouraging those gathered to "fight this terror with the ammunition of love... to love one another," he asked, otherwise what happens to our children? "Twenty percent of our children live in poverty... Forty-two percent of our red children live on reservations and only eighteen percent have telephones.... Forty percent are brown people, who live in barrios, locked in ghettos and hoods.... Twenty-one percent of American children now say they suffer depression."

Proclaiming the College as a "force for good, not just in New Rochelle, but also in Harlem and Brooklyn, where people are often overlooked," he saluted the legacy of the Ursulines, closing with "if the Kingdom of God is within you then everywhere you go, you should leave a little of heaven behind."

In recognition of Dr. West's life "so generously engaged in responding to society's aching need for justice and equity," following his address, CNR President Stephen Sweeny conferred an honorary degree on Dr. West, describing him as "one of America's most authentic, brilliant, prophetic, and healing voices."

Dr. West then went on to generously give more of his time to The College of New Rochelle community, as for more than an hour following the convocation he graciously signed autographs and spoke with students, faculty, and alumnae/i – individuals who collectively represent the rich diversity of CNR today, diversity that in the words of Gill Library Dean and College historian Dr. James Schleifer, "is an important part of the success story of The College of New Rochelle, a part of our history of one hundred years of which we should be especially proud."

By agreement between The College of New Rochelle and Dr. Cornel West, the entire speech delivered at the College by Dr. West is not available for publication. The article above is reprinted from the Summer 2004 issue of Quarterly.

CREATIVITY, INNOVATION, CELEBRATION: The Future of Women's Colleges

Patricia A. McGuire President, Trinity College Washington, DC

ongratulations to The College of New Rochelle on the occasion of your Centennial! Your colleagues and friends at Trinity in Washington are cheering for you! We, too, recently celebrated our Centennial, and we know how important this historical moment is in the life of an institution of higher learning, especially one with the special mission in women's education. May this celebratory year be a strong foundation for your second century.

Thank you, President Sweeny, for inviting me to share this day with you. I am so grateful to you for this magnificent honor and your wonderful, warm friendship and collegial wisdom as we work together on the Women's College Coalition board and so many other endeavors.

The College of New Rochelle first came onto my radar screen in 1987 when I had the pleasure of meeting Sister Dorothy Ann Kelly. I say "pleasure" even though the occasion was a somewhat stressful time at Trinity, when Sister Dorothy Ann was chairing a special Middle States team to our campus. I was on the board, not yet president. We were in a rough patch, with enrollment declining, spirits sagging, hope in our future fading. With the fire of her conviction about the absolute rightness of our mission as a Catholic college for women, Sister Dorothy Ann called us out of our confusion and challenged us to seize our mission and make it work for the contemporary women who need us so very much. From the bottom of my heart, thank you, Sister Dorothy Ann, for your inspiration.



IMAGINE A WORLD IN WHICH
WOMEN WERE DENIED THE
OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN
BROADLY, WHERE MILLIONS OF
WOMEN WERE UNABLE EVEN TO
READ OR WRITE, A WORLD
WHERE WOMEN WERE DISENFRANCHISED, TREATED AS PROPERTY, DENIED A SEPARATE EXISTENCE APART FROM MEN. THAT
WAS THE WORLD OUR
FOUNDERS KNEW JUST A CENTURY AGO. THAT IS THE WORLD
THAT MILLIONS OF GIRLS AND
WOMEN INHABIT TODAY

AROUND THE WORLD.

Trinity salutes all that you have done to make The College of New Rochelle the exemplar for the ideal of the Catholic women's college of the 21st century.

And, what exactly is that women's college of the 21st century? Can such an institution persist in a world of homogenized, commoditized, mass market higher education? I think it's particularly appropriate for me to try to answer this question in the middle of the season known as "March Madness," a peculiarly American sociological phenomenon that exposes the persistent gender gap in higher education.

This year, The College of New Rochelle has already won its most important championship!

The 100th anniversary of The College of New Rochelle is a triumph of vision, persistence, and creativity for the sake of this great mission. This mission has always been one of the most complex in all of higher education, particularly for the women's colleges who also share our Catholic tradition. We who are the stewards of the nation's Catholic women's colleges are the heirs of the legacy of giants, women like St. Angela Merici and Mother Irene Gill and their Ursuline sisters through the years here at New Rochelle; or St. Julie Billiart and Sister Julia McGroarty and the Sisters of Notre Dame who followed them at Trinity. (Our Sisters of Notre Dame, by the way, are celebrating their 200th anniversary this year.)

Their stories are simply remarkable. In days long before women's liberation, before women could vote, before women could hold property or most positions of authority, these women were powerful

leaders in both the spiritual and temporal realms. They created their institutional legacies in times when Catholic women religious were just about the only women who could be founders and owners and presidents and CEOs of schools and hospitals and institutions. As late as 1970, according to statistics compiled by the American Council on Education, only 5 percent of the college and university presidents in the United States were women, but 90 percent of those women were Catholic religious.

Calling the establishment of Catholic women's colleges a tale of "female initiative on a grand scale," the editors of Catholic Women's Colleges in America cite this quotation from Rosemary Reuther and Eleanor McLaughlin's Female Leadership in the Jewish and Christian Traditions: "Catholic nuns, though they belonged to an extremely patriarchal church... were in some ways the most liberated women in nineteenth century America.' Their religious vocation allowed them to transcend gender roles considered normative." As a result, they persisted and triumphed in founding institutions of higher education that were gateways for thousands of women, largely the daughters and granddaughters of immigrants, to achieve professional success, economic security, and personal fulfillment.

To a large extent, whether religious or lay, Catholic or not, the founders of the nation's women's colleges generally faced considerable opposition in their effort to establish these institutions. I recall reading in one history of Smith College a passage written by a female physician warning of the inevitable collapse of a woman's nervous system under the rigors of advanced study. At Trinity, our archives include numerous press clippings about the vigorous public opposition to Trinity's founding, led by right-wing clerics who viewed women's education as part of the heresy of "Americanism." Here at New Rochelle, your historian James Schleifer reminds us that skeptical clerics called the effort "Irene's Folly."2

The first century of great success in women's education eloquently refuted the original critics, but ironically, as each women's college turns the page on a new century, new skepticism abounds at the intersection of mission and market. Despite the fact that women's colleges produced some of the greatest leaders in a broad span of professional and civic arenas throughout the 20th century, invidious stereotypes continue to plague us - go no farther than this year's unfortunate depiction of Wellesley women in Mona Lisa Smile. We who are the stewards of women's colleges today certainly have our share of wakeful moments when we wonder if we can sustain this good work, if we are persisting more because of hubris than common sense.

My imagination wanders through the possibilities, thinking about a world without women's colleges.

Imagine a world in which women were denied the opportunity to learn broadly, where millions of women were unable even to read or write, a world where women were disenfranchised, treated as property, denied a separate existence apart from men. That was the world our founders knew just a century ago. That is the world that millions of girls and women inhabit today around the world. A recent UNESCO report indicates that upwards of 65 million girls in our global village are not in school today. Even more alarming, U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan pointed out in a speech last year that, "There are nearly 900 million illiterates in the world today - and two-thirds of them are women."3

Imagine a world without female role models to inspire the rising generations. Imagine a world in which women could not aspire to be doctors or lawyers or bankers or physicists because they were not allowed to attend college. That was the condition for almost all women just 100 years ago. Little has changed in large parts of the globe. Imagine a world in which women are expected to do only the most menial manual labor, as migrant

farmworkers or trapped in sweatshops or working two and three jobs as maids and custodians without any hope of advancement. You need not go very far to find such conditions even in the wealthiest nation on earth.

Imagine a world deprived of Silent Spring and the environmental intelligence of Rachel Carson; a world without the Good Earth and Pearl Buck's Nobel Prizewinning writing; a world without the path-breaking leadership of Frances Perkins, Jeanne Kirkpatrick, Madeleine Albright, Hillary Rodham Clinton, Nancy Pelosi, the first women, respectively, in the Cabinet, UN Ambassador, Secretary of State, elected Senator after serving as first lady, leader of a major party in Congress. Imagine a world without New Rochelle's own Lt. Governor Mary Donohue, or Katharine Hepburn, Ella Grasso, Hanna Holborn Gray - all graduates of women's colleges.

A world deprived of women's colleges would be, quite simply, unimaginable. Our time is not past; our greatest work unfolds each day in each new life we touch and transform through the great work of the faculty and staff who give our mission life, and graduates who infuse the values of this mission in their work with families and schools and hospitals and corporations and communities and countless places throughout the world.

Yes, certain realities have challenged us greatly in recent years. Women's colleges were so successful in changing the perceptions of the elite ruling classes about women's capacity for education and work and leadership that we nearly put ourselves out of business. By the middle of the 20th century, men's colleges and universities saw what the women's colleges had achieved and decided that they wanted those bright, capable women on their own campuses. And, of course, in the 1960s and 1970s women were more than delighted to flock through the open gates at Harvard and Yale, Georgetown and Fordham, Penn State and Virginia and UCLA because that newfound access to

the ultimate men's clubs signified equality at long last.

Later on, of course, women would learn that access did not necessarily mean equality of opportunity. Women needed a law, Title IX, to give them true opportunity in higher education. But even with the hassles and scandals of chilly classrooms and abusive locker rooms on coed campuses, there was no turning back. New generations of women accepted coeducation as normative and rejected single-sex education as retrograde, in spite of all evidence to the contrary. "The list" is flaunted endlessly: from a high of nearly 300 women's colleges in 1960, 65 institutions continue to identify as women's colleges today. How many will be on the roster five and 10 and 20 years from now? I'll have another thought about that list at

Skeptics about our future say that what was necessary, essential, indeed, revolutionary in the late 19th and early- to mid-20th centuries clearly went out of fashion by the end of the 20th. Women are now the majority throughout higher education. Isn't it true, ask the skeptics, that women no longer need a "Room of One's Own" to unleash their creative powers, their leadership abilities, their self-confidence, and potential for genius?

Frankly, no.

Americans have notoriously short attention spans. In the last decade we've seen a great eagerness to declare important social revolutions to be "so over," "so twentieth century." Civil rights, women's rights, human rights – such talk seems out of fashion in an age that's more concerned about the future of *Martha Stewart Living* than the history of *Ms.* magazine. Talk of racial and economic and social justice is condemned as so much "political correctness."

The women's revolution, we hear, is over. Tell that to the women who take home 77 cents for every male dollar on a good day. Tell that to the women who clean your hotel rooms, who sew your garments, make your Nikes, who pick your strawberries and cabbages through



back-breaking mind-numbing days on end in hot fields, who struggle to raise their children alone while earning a minimum wage, or worse.

For most of the world, the revolution has not even begun – and it's not coming anytime soon.

What does all of this have to do with the future of women's colleges?

Women's colleges are the witnesses, the memory, the voice of women's intellectual freedom and liberation. In an educational marketplace that exalts super-sized, homogenized credentialing machines, we need women's colleges as places that continue to give meaning to the ideals of justice and equality through the careful, attentive education of each person. We need women's colleges to ensure that the power of educated women can continue to influence a society that relentlessly objectifies and demeans women, that still betrays its children by impoverishing their mothers in low-paying jobs and unequal opportunities, that still has too many places where men abuse and degrade women privately and then aren't sure what all the fuss is about when they are found out.

True, there were times in our history when the inherent elitism of historic educational models obscured the fact that our founding impulse was rooted in the idea of justice and human dignity. But the cultural revolution of the postwar years blew away the old social conventions, leading women's colleges to consider the true meaning of our mission. The DNA of Catholic women's colleges, in particular, is entwined with the Gospel imperative of social justice. In her essay "Faith, Knowledge and Gender" in Catholic Women's Colleges in America, former Smith College President Jill Ker Conway notes that "The conventional perception of Catholic women's institutions as backward-looking agents for fostering middleclass ideals of gentility overlooks their striking capacity to institutionalize ideals of social justice left out or ignored within the larger higher educational system,"5 largely as a result of the infusion of the charism of the founding congregations into the mission of the college.

Having said all of this in defense of women's colleges, however, I must also admit the truth of our current situation: if we think this mission is still worth it, then we must change completely. This is the deeply countercultural paradox of the women's college mission. As President Sweeny has written in his Centennial message, we are not curators of a museum. We are stewards of the dynamic and transformative force of learning, delivered in a focused way to those who need us the most: women excluded from educational opportunity. That's not different from what we've always done — but, oh, how different we are today and will be even more so in the future.

The countercultural paradox of our mission requires us to embrace the possibilities inherent in making higher education accessible to the millions of women for whom the dream of a college degree is still so elusive. The morality of our mission requires us to ask of ourselves: if we don't offer such women the opportunity of transformation through education, who will? Think of how much more we could achieve in the future if we acted on the U.N. International Women's Day challenge to worldwide women educators to take a lead in educating the daughters of the world.6 Secretary General Annan makes the case this way: "We know from study after study that there is no tool for development more effective than the education of girls and women."7

There's a price to be paid, of course, for embracing the essence of our mission as places of access for excluded women. The countercultural paradox requires us to leave behind our old notions of elitism in access as a surrogate for academic quality; to stop shrinking inside when our alumnae ask us, "But what about SAT scores?"; to part company with that intransigent impulse of regret pinching our hearts when somebody mentions the US News rankings. There's no place in US News that measures how well a college lives up to the moral imperative of its mission; how many lives transformed; how many families made more secure by the greater earning capacity of the mother; how many children persisting in school because they saw Mom working so hard to earn her college degree; how many school children educated more fully, clients served better, patients saved, readers enlightened, corporations transformed, communities and cities and nations improved because of the relentless quest of our graduates to live out the expectations of this mission with passion, with excellence, and with conviction.

The countercultural paradox of our mission requires us to become better advocates for the absolute rightness of educational access for underserved women, without apology. We can start at home. As I study census and demographic data and data on who attends college, I continue to be struck by the very large gap in levels of educational attainment for all Americans. In fact, there's no shortage of women in this country who could and should attend women's colleges in the future. They are women who have been radically underserved by education in the past: low-income white women, African-American, Latina, Asian, and immigrant women from all backgrounds. We made it possible for the daughters and granddaughters of our old markets to graduate from Harvard; shouldn't we be doing the same for the daughters and granddaughters of new markets of women previously excluded from higher learning?

Last week there was a flurry of news stories about the fact that by the Year 2050, Caucasians will no longer be the majority in this nation. But this is old news. In particular the rapid increase in the Hispanic population, and continued growth in the African-American population, will be a significant challenge for all institutions of higher learning. The Educational Testing Service has already predicted that 80 percent of the nearly three million-student increase in collegiate enrollment by the year 2010 will be among Black and Hispanic students. The nation's women's colleges have astounding leadership opportunity to ensure the education and advancement of great women leaders for the future from among these rising populations of women of color.

The College of New Rochelle was among the first of the nation's women's colleges to recognize that our historic mission could only make sense going forward if we understood women's education as broadly inclusive, as a gateway for the transformation of entire families through the education of people from all social classes and life conditions.

In her comments in *Catholic Women's Colleges in America*, Jill Ker Conway recognized The College of New Rochelle as one of her exemplars of the "special genius" of Catholic institutions founded by women religious "to find and serve important late twentieth century constituencies..."⁸

Our stewardship to our founders, our graduates, and the students who will be here in generations to come requires that we take the actions necessary to ensure the vitality, quality, and durability of our institutions for the future. These actions may differ from institution to institution, depending upon geography and history and resources and the charism of the founding congregation where one exists. I predict, however, that many if not most women's colleges will, of necessity, pursue these strategic actions going forward:

- 1) Women's colleges will illuminate more clearly the core values of woman-centered education in justice, equality, freedom, and human dignity; if this be "political correctness" then let's be guilty, that's our countercultural paradox!
- 2) Women's colleges will be voices and advocates for those values not just within our own institutions, but for women and people throughout the world. Women's colleges cannot be afraid to use the bully pulpit of our privileged places to speak out on behalf of those who cannot. We must and will be places that offer solutions and actions for the worldwide problem of education for women and girls, summarized in the 2003 UNESCO Global Monitoring Report: "In no society do

women yet enjoy the same opportunities as men... The continuing prevalence of educational inequality is a major infringement of the rights of women and girls, and it is also an important impediment to social and economic development." 9

- 3) Women's colleges will, increasingly, become models of access both domestically and internationally, and in this regard, we will build-out our technological capacity so that we can reach those future students who cannot travel to our campuses. We will create models for online learning that also deliver our characteristic careful attention to each student's growth and needs.
- 4) Women's colleges will be more affirmative about the ethic and culture of opportunity and student success that characterizes our learning enterprises; in particular, we will promote even more vigorous women's leadership programs for our new populations for whom the idea of public leadership is so urgent. We will enhance our tradition of rigor and excellence through demonstrating ever more pointedly the success of our mission among women from vastly different backgrounds.
- 5) (Here's where you might think I've lost my mind.) Women's colleges will throw off the stifling armor of "single-sex" language and attitudes, a posture that persists in keeping us isolated and exclusive, an outmoded existence that cannot exist online, at worksites, and in all of the places that we need to be in order to deliver our educational programs. Women's colleges today are woman-centered places of learning that cannot be anti-male, afraid of men, or unwilling to include men who share our sense of mission and who can benefit from our programs.

We must stop allowing ourselves to be defined by absence; we need to be defined by action.

Let's retire the phrase "going coed" as a relic of that old exclusive, isolated past.

Remember that infamous list of 300, now 65? Let's burn that list of who's in and who's out of the women's college world. Many of us who proudly call ourselves women's colleges today are, in fact, comprehensive universities with a broad range of programs that serve students who need us, male as well as female, young and old, in liberal arts and professional programs. Our woman-centered mission is not defined by excluding men, but by serving women's needs affirmatively. Let's join in solidarity with all like-minded sister institutions! Let's get our Women's College Coalition to abolish the litmus test that determines who may be in the club - it's in the way of real transforma-

In short, 21st century women's colleges will move strategically with a spirit of creativity, innovation, and celebration for all the good that we do. We'll take a page from the instructions of St. Angela Merici: "If with change of times and

circumstances, it becomes necessary to make fresh rules, or to alter anything, then do it with prudence, after taking good advice."¹⁰

We will do what it takes to flourish, because we know, as The College of New Rochelle has demonstrated to the world for 100 years, that to learn in a place such as this is to acquire "Wisdom for Life."

- 1 Tracy Schier and Cynthia Russett, editors, Catholic Women's Colleges in America (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), pp. 3 and 4.
- 2 James T. Schleifer, The College of New Rochelle: An Extraordinary Story (The Donning Company, 1994), p. 14.
- 3 U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan in a speech for the U.N. Literacy Decade launch at the New York Public Library, February 13, 2003.
- 4 Virginia Woolf, A Room of One's Own (1929).
- 5 Jill Ker Conway in Schier and Russett, eds., Catholic Women's Colleges in America, p. 13.
- 6 International Women's Day, 8th March 2003, Education International statement.
- 7 Annan, February 13, 2003.
- 8 Ibid., p. 14.
- 9 UNESCO Global Monitoring Report, Gender and Education for All: The Leap to Equality, 2003.
- 10 Irene Mahoney, OSU, Saint Angela Merici: Foundress of the Ursulines, p. 18.
- 11 Centennial slogan of The College of New Rochelle.



WOMEN'S COLLEGES IN AMERICA: A Brief History

BARBARA F. McManus
Professor Emeritus of Classics
The College of New Rochelle

s a former student and long-time faculty member of The College of New Rochelle, I feel very honored to be part of this Centennial panel. As a prelude to the main event, I have been asked to say a few words about the history of women's colleges. Instead of going through the details of that history, which would take far too long and probably bore you all to tears, I want to sketch out a few significant general themes which I hope will provide a context for the more detailed presentations of our panelists.

You may be surprised to learn that it all began with beer. Although there had been some preliminary efforts in various parts of the United States toward establishing colleges for women in the middle of the 19th century, the first full-fledged baccalaureate institution of higher education for women was founded in 1861 and opened its doors in 1865 - Vassar College, founded by Matthew Vassar. In his first address to the Trustees of his new college, he described his motivation for endowing the college in these words, "It occurred to me that woman, having received from her Creator the same intellectual constitution as man, has the same right as man to intellectual culture and development."1 Of course, the true story is more complex than that. Vassar had made a fortune by brewing and selling beer in Poughkeepsie, and in his sixties he was seeking to endow a charitable project that would make the Vassar name remembered for something besides beer. He wanted to build a hospital, but his friend Milo Jewett, an educator with a vision but no money, in 1856

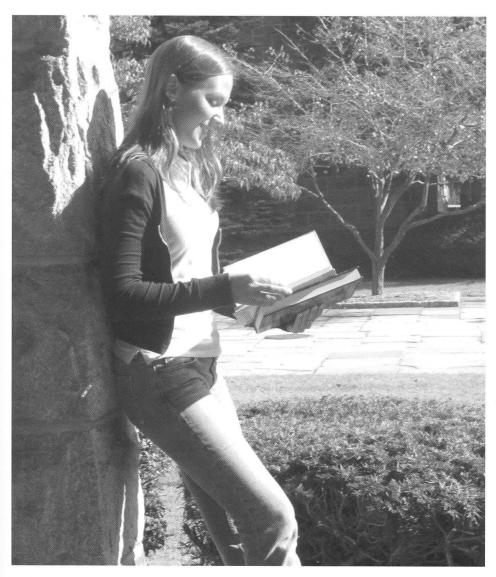


persuaded Vassar that he could really make a name for himself by being a "first." Jewett told him that although a number of institutions were called "female colleges," there was not "an endowed college for young women [anywhere] in the world [that would be] what Yale and Harvard are to young men."2 Although Matthew Vassar had apparently never thought much about women before, this idea really caught his attention, and he devoted the rest of his life and the bulk of his fortune to bringing it to fruition. A later entry in his diary indicates how he began to think of himself: "the founder of Vassar College and President Lincoln -Two Noble Emancipists - one of Woman - [the other of] The Negro."3 However, what we might call the enlightened selfinterest of Matthew Vassar did constitute the first major step in a process that would have far-reaching consequences for women and men and would eventually change the face of higher education.

This is a particularly American story,

revolution in higher education. I want to single out two important factors that I believe allowed higher education for women to develop more quickly and comprehensively in America than in England, though the process began at approximately the same time in both countries. First, most women's colleges in America were founded as independent institutions, separate from colleges and universities for men. The luckiest were endowed by wealthy philanthropists like Vassar, Sophia Smith (Smith College), Joseph Taylor (Bryn Mawr), and of course John Simmons (Simmons College) and Henry Wells (Wells College). However, many others started on a shoestring or were set up by dedicated companies of nuns, such as the School Sisters of Notre Dame, who founded the College of Notre Dame of Maryland, or the Ursuline Sisters, who founded The College of New Rochelle. England had a very different model; there colleges for women began as residences informally attached to the large male universities. The male members of these universities had to vote on offering educational privileges to women, and they did so very grudgingly. Thus the opening up of full educational opportunities for women occurred much more slowly in Britain than in the United States. For example, although Girton and Newnham Colleges were begun at Cambridge in the 1870s, women were not admitted to full membership in the university and awarded Cambridge degrees until 1947. In Oxford, Somerville was begun in 1879, but women were not awarded university

and the United States did in fact lead this



degrees until 1920.

Since the American colleges for women had no such restrictions and since they provided a totally separate education, many more young women were enabled to acquire a baccalaureate education because their families were willing to entrust them to a single-sex institution. An 1875 entry in the diary of 18-year-old Martha Carey Thomas, who was later to be very instrumental in the founding of Bryn Mawr College, expressed very well the pent-up demand that the new women's colleges would fill: "there is so much opposition to the only thing I care for... it is so impossible to get the highest culture by one's self, and I have to see

thousands of boys enjoying and often throwing away the chances I would give anything for."4 The relatively rapid growth of women's colleges at the end of the 19th century also raised the quality of women's education across the board in the United States, since secondary schools beefed up their curricula in order to prepare girls for entrance into the new colleges. And more and more co-educational opportunities opened up for women, especially in parts of the country where there were no women's colleges, in response to the new demand for higher education for women that was being fueled by the women's colleges.

I think the second major factor that

differentiated American women's colleges from those in England was even more significant than the first - the fact that women's colleges in the United States not only offered women higher education and degrees, but also gave many of them the opportunity to use their education as professional scholars and academics. Let's listen once again to Matthew Vassar, who had originally planned to employ only male faculty in his new college, but who decided, as he wrote to his Trustees in 1864, that he would instead make "a generous partition between the sexes of all the professorships ... for it is vain to educate woman's powers of thought, and then limit their operation."5 True to Vassar's pragmatic orientation, he then went on to say that they really couldn't afford an allmale faculty, and women's salaries would be lower.

For whatever reason it occurred, this was a crucial step in the education of women in America. Although a handful of women did obtain academic positions at co-educational colleges and universities, for decades the women's colleges provided the only real opportunity for highly educated women to achieve a career as academic professionals. This had many consequences. It provided a major incentive for American women to pursue higher education, especially doctorates. It also meant that the young women studying in the women's colleges would have seasoned and sophisticated female role models among their professors, which in turn helped create an environment that fostered aspirations for achievement of all kinds among the students. This is expressed very well by a letter written to her parents by a Vassar student named Dorothy Danforth in 1915, after she had witnessed the ceremonies celebrating Vassar's 50th anniversary: "I think these last few days I have gotten a broader view of the college woman than ever before and the opportunity that she has in her community after she leaves college...It is the college woman who does things. She is fitted for the fullest life. She has gotten the vision... It is



interesting to look at all the old graduates. As a whole they are the most splendid worthwhile looking women I have ever seen. Their faces are so strong. They look as if they stood for something in the world and had contributed much towards improving it. It's great to feel that you belong to such a body." When I read this letter, I thought immediately of the contrast between this young woman's sense of belonging and empowerment as early as 1915 and Virginia Woolf's powerful description of women's exclusion from what she called "the procession of educated men" in her essay Three Guineas as late as 1938 in England.

For another illustration of the significance of the women's college environment let me jump ahead to 1960, when I entered The College of New Rochelle as a scared young freshman wondering how I would fare in the demanding world of college. Those who know me now would probably be amazed by the fact that I was so timid in my first year that several professors went out of their way to encourage me to speak up in class. During my four years at the College, I developed a sense of competence and confidence that has supported me through the rest of my life, and I also conceived a desire to join that procession of educated women in full academic regalia. It was not until I went to graduate school at Harvard in pursuit of this desire that I fully realized how important the CNR environment had been to my development. There were no tenured women in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Harvard at that time; in fact, during my entire time in graduate school I never saw a single female faculty member. I experienced constant reminders of my second-class status, such as having to run a gauntlet of men telling me that women were not allowed in Lamont Library every time I went to my class on the second-floor of the building. I can't count the number of times I had to pull out my special pass permitting me to ascend the stairs to the second floor. When I attended an extra-curricular program of lectures for graduate students planning a career in college teaching, the first thing the speaker said was that women would be permitted to attend his lectures, but we should not expect to get hired by any major university because we were just going to drop out and have babies. Thanks to my education at CNR, I wasn't really fazed by any of this, but I remember thinking that I was very glad I had not entered Harvard as that scared young freshman!

All this was in the mid-sixties, and already the civil rights and modern feminist movements were beginning to alter circumstances, if not attitudes. By the

1970s dramatic changes were occurring, as almost every all-male institution began to admit women students, and many women's colleges also became co-educational, with Vassar leading the way in 1969.

Indeed, according to the Women's College Coalition there are only 65 women's colleges remaining in the United States, and 6 percent of them are represented right here on this dais. One of the issues our speakers today will consider is the place and role of women's colleges in this changed educational landscape.

When conducting research for a biography I am writing about Grace Harriet Macurdy, turn-of-the-century professor of Greek at Vassar College, I was very pleased to see that she shared my view about the important role played by American women's colleges. In a 1940 review of a book on the first 50 years of Barnard College, she wrote, "This story of noble struggle and achievement for the higher education of women would seem incredible in any country but America. It happens to be true, and this book and other histories of the American colleges for women should form part of every cultural study of our civilization."7 With Grace, I am proud of this American achievement. Although many generations later than Grace, I too owe my education and career to a women's college, so I am delighted to be part of a panel celebrating this heritage.

- 1 Matthew Vassar, First Address to the Trustees of Vassar College, February 26, 1861. Quoted in James Monroe Taylor and Elizabeth Hazelton Haight, Vassar (Oxford UP, 1915), 208.
- 2 Milo P. Jewett, "Origins of Vassar College," March, 1879. Quoted in Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Alma Mater* (2nd ed. U of Massachusetts P, 1984; 1993), 30.
- 3 Quoted in Barbara Miller Solomon, In the Company of Educated Women (Yale UP, 1985), 48.
- 4 Quoted in Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *The Power and Passion of M. Carey Thomas* (U of Illinois P, 1994), 52.
- 5 Matthew Vassar, Communications to the Board of Trustees of Vassar College by its Founder, February, 1864. Quoted in Taylor and Haight, 24-25.
- 6 Dorothy (Danforth) Compton VC '17, letter to parents, Oct. 13, 1915. Special Collections, Vassar College.
- 7 Grace Harriet Macurdy, Review of Barnard College: The First Fifty Years by Alice Duer Miller and Susan Myers (1939) for New York History, February 1940. Special Collections, Vassar College.

THE ROLE OF CATHOLIC WOMEN'S COLLEGES

Mary Pat Seurkamp President, College of Notre Dame of Maryland

am very pleased to share a place on this panel with Lisa Ryerson of Wells College and Dan Cheever of Simmons College, institutions that reflect so well the development of secular women's colleges and with whom we have so much in common.

When I was asked to focus on the role of Catholic women's colleges in higher education, it seemed quite appropriate: I am a graduate of a women's college – what was then Webster College in St. Louis and Catholic at the time – and now serve as president of the College of Notre Dame of Maryland. Clearly, this is a topic close to my heart.

What is curious is that until recently, Catholic women's colleges have received minimal attention by researchers writing histories or analyses of trends in American higher education. The great historian of higher education, Frederick Rudolph (The American College and University: A History), gives only a cursory treatment of women's colleges in general and barely a glance at Catholic women's colleges. Scholars writing about women's colleges either ignored the contributions of Catholic women's colleges or declared that they operated at the periphery of American higher education, thus not warranting consideration. Even scholars of Catholic higher education chose not to address the role of these women's colleges.

This gap in scholarly work is now redressed by a book entitled *Catholic Women's Colleges in America*, edited by Tracy Schier and Cynthia Russett. This book looks at colleges founded by women religious, some of which remain women's



colleges today and some of which are now coed. In a paper presented at the 2002 ACCU (Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities) annual meeting, Sister Karen Kennelly asserted that this Catholic women's college movement leads "...to the impressive conclusion that in no other country in the world has Catholic women's capacity for and right to a higher education been addressed in so effective a manner. As a consequence, in no other country has so highly an educated and socially conscious a cohort of Catholic women been enabled to influence the scholarly world and to assume leadership in church and society." (Kennelly, Catholic Higher Education: A Heritage with a

Future, p.4).

Catholic women's colleges from the beginning focused on four essential elements: 1) access, 2) academic quality, 3) serving underserved populations, and 4) the role of faith and service in the intellectual enterprise. These elements have been reinterpreted over the years to reflect contemporary society but still remain central in these institutions.

Let's consider first some of the data about women's colleges and then I will turn to the four essential elements and the role they played in the origins and development of Catholic women's colleges.

- Women's colleges began to appear in the mid-19th century with Catholic women's colleges appearing at the end of that century.
- The College of Notre Dame of Maryland added collegiate instruction to its Institute for Girls in 1895, was chartered in 1896 to offer degrees through the doctor of philosophy, and awarded baccalaureate degrees to its first six graduates in 1899, making it the first Catholic women's college in the United States to award the baccalaureate degree.
- Other Catholic women's colleges founded at the turn of the century included St. Mary's (South Bend, Indiana), St. Mary-of-the-Woods, College of St. Elizabeth, and The College of New Rochelle. Trinity College in Washington, D.C., founded in 1900, was the first Catholic women's college to be established as a college, rather than evolving from an academy for girls.

• At their highest number in 1950, there were 267 women's colleges (Tidball, *Taking Women Seriously*, p.20). By 1968, the number had dropped to slightly more than 225, but Catholic women's colleges had reached their peak and constituted 142 of those women's colleges. They, by the way, also represented the largest segment of Catholic higher education (Hassenger, *The Shape of Catholic Higher Education*, p.83).

Access

What was the impetus for Catholic women's colleges being founded? To answer this, it is important to consider the environmental context for women. The overall culture at the time believed that men and women operated in different spheres and that women were not as intelligent. Noted educators argued that educating women could be injurious to their health, that women would not be able to endure the strain of higher learning, and that they would be less likely to marry and have children, and thus negatively affect the social order of America. Secular women's colleges provided the first wave of response to these attitudes.

The Catholic Church in large measure reflected these views about women. Even as late as 1915, these attitudes were still prevalent. Mother Ignatius, a former Dean at The College of New Rochelle, indicated that "the ideal of higher education for women... did not appeal strongly to the Catholic public." (Mahoney in Catholic Women's Colleges in America, p. 46). Despite these attitudes, a tension operating in the Church resulted in a second wave of women's colleges being founded at the end of the 19th century this time, mostly Catholic colleges. By the end of the 19th century, as many Catholic families had acquired the means and the desire to send their daughters to college, the only option available was at the secular institutions. The Church was concerned about assimilation - of Catholics losing their focus because of exposure to

education in secular settings. Thus, as Kathleen Mahoney tells us in her work, a confluence of three elements led to the initial founding of Catholic women's colleges: 1) the need and demand from sisters and middle class Catholic women for higher education, 2) conservative and liberal Catholics recognized, for different reasons, the advantage of having Catholic colleges for women, and 3) a rich resource of scholars and educators among religious sisters provided a means to open such colleges (Mahoney, in Catholic Women's Colleges in America, pp.27-28). And as a result, women secured greater access to a college education.

Academic Quality

In the way that Catholic women's colleges have been so easily dismissed by scholars, it would be easy to assume that the curricula and faculties of these early colleges were, while perhaps minimally adequate, not on a par with their secular counterparts. Further, one might think that these colleges offered a curriculum that supported the traditional role for women in domestic affairs. Nothing could be further from the truth. Scholars of women's education document the strength of educational programs at these colleges. Mary Oates, in particular, refutes the notion that Catholic women's colleges did not join their secular counterparts in challenging stereotypes about women. Oates argues that "...the nation's most prominent sister-educators consistently rejected the idea that women required a different preparation for life than men." (Oates, in Catholic Women's Colleges in America, p. 175).

In reality, the precursor academies to most Catholic women's colleges already offered a competitive and challenging curriculum. When schools such as College of St. Elizabeth, Notre Dame of Maryland, St. Mary's, the College of St. Catherine contemplated moving to collegiate instruction, they did so easily and quickly because of what were externally judged to be college-level courses already present in

their curricula. Sister educators sought instead the highest standards of an American college education modeled after the best mainstream women's colleges and set in the context of Catholic ideals.

Sister educators were committed to providing women an education comparable to secular private colleges for women and comparable to what men received. These colleges stressed an education that developed leaders in American society, including the professional world. Amidst these initiatives, sisters were warned about developing "too male" a curriculum for its women, but paid no attention to these cautions.

Sister educators also understood the importance of advanced degrees for their faculty. Unlike their secular counterparts, the vast majority of faculty and administrators at Catholic women's colleges were women - and largely members of the religious congregation. These religious congregations faced monumental hurdles in developing their faculties, yet their commitment to providing their students the best education possible spurred them to solve this issue quickly. Kennelly points out that "...within two decades of college foundings, sisters with doctorates were teaching courses in most academic disciplines at such pioneer colleges as Notre Dame of Maryland, Trinity, St. Mary's (South Bend), St. Catherine's, and St. Teresa's." (Kennelly, Catholic Higher Education: A Heritage with a Future, p.6). Despite pressures to do otherwise, sisters chose to pursue graduate programs at both Catholic and secular institutions, with significant numbers attaining degrees at secular universities. (From institutions such as Harvard, Johns Hopkins, Columbia, Fordham, University of Pennsylvania, and Stanford, as well as from Catholic universities.)

Serving Underserved Populations

Another defining characteristic of these women's colleges was a consistent response to underserved populations. Initially this was a response to women of

traditional age and background. Then these colleges in very special ways opened their educational doors to students of color and first-generation immigrants. Mount St. Mary's in California has attracted national attention for the education it provides to a highly multicultural student body - two-thirds of its students are first-generation immigrants from Latin America and Pacific Rim countries. (Kennelly, Catholic Higher Education: A Heritage with a Future, p.17). Trinity College in Washington, DC serves a predominantly non-white student body, reflecting the community in which it resides. The College of New Rochelle has similarly reached out to non-traditional populations, with students of color comprising 85 percent of its enrollment in the School of New Resources. Others, such as my own college, consistently serve a student body in which students of color comprise one third of the enrollment, much higher than what is found at most private colleges.

Also in recent times, these colleges responded to another underserved population - non-traditional working adult women. Realizing that women who had earlier foregone college now needed baccalaureate degrees in order to achieve their professional goals, Catholic women's colleges initiated innovative programs responsive to the needs of these women. Saint Mary-of-the-Woods developed the external degree program for returning adult women. Mundelein College offered the first Weekend College program, followed by Notre Dame of Maryland, The College of New Rochelle, and the College of St. Catherine. In like manner, accelerated degree programs are now proliferating at Catholic women's colleges. There is no question that these programs were opportunities to generate additional student enrollment and that they serve women and men, but no one should underestimate the critical role these new programs played in once again opening educational doors for women.

Faith, Service, Change

Catholic women's colleges have also been good guardians of Catholic identity and help students appreciate the relationship between faith and reason - to understand that there is no conflict between knowledge and faith. From the beginning, Catholic women's colleges required the study of philosophy and theology, but increased their graduation requirements to 132 credit hours so there would be no inference that the study of theology took away from the study of other areas. The environments of these colleges underscored the importance and centrality of prayer, reflection, and liturgy. Careful thought was given to how architecture of campuses supported spiritual lives. These colleges took seriously in the 20th century the body of Catholic social teaching and incorporated social analysis and the call to social action in the overall learning environment. This was perhaps most noticeable in the 1960s and 1970s as our country struggled with issues of race and peace. Katarina Schuth comments that these colleges responded to their longheld and deep-seated belief that "promoting systemic change, to be successful, requires highly educated and intellectually sophisticated participation." (Schuth, Women Religious and the Intellectual Life, p.25). A commitment to serve others has also consistently been at the core of these institutions, impressing upon students that they have a responsibility to use their education for the good of others and society.

Conclusion

The majority of colleges founded by women religious were at their inception all women's colleges. As times, and demographics, changed these institutions responded as they felt necessary. Some closed; some became coed; some merged with other institutions; some formed coordinate relationships with others; and some remain all women in their full-time programs. But all of these colleges share a

heritage. Their commitment to the education of women at a time when this held little value represented a tremendous act of courage, vision, and risk-taking. The lives of these colleges reflected a continuous healthy tension between this risk-taking and traditional norms. The willingness to be responsive to new conditions and new populations was and is today noteworthy.

As historian Gerda Lerner – and others – acknowledge, the sisters were key players in womankind's long struggle for the right to an education and a life of the mind (Knoerle and Schier, in *Catholic Women's Colleges in America*, p.338). It is the sisters' early commitment to education and to the ideal that knowledge empowers one to bring about positive and systemic change that continues to operate forcefully at our remaining Catholic women's colleges.

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WHY A WOMEN'S COLLEGE?

Lisa Marsh Ryerson President, Wells College

et me start by saying congratulations to The College of New Rochelle community on your Centennial. It's a great achievement. And it's great to be here. It's terrific to get to know Barbara McManus face to face after online conversations, and to be here with two very close colleagues, Mary Pat Seurkamp and Dan Cheever.

I could name each and every one of you. It's delightful to be welcomed by Wells women here today, and also a Wells College trustee. But I want to begin by sharing with you how much I've enjoyed meeting Steve Sweeny, who as a male president of a women's college is in the minority in the women's college community in which he serves, but you are a passionate advocate on behalf of women-centered education and women's colleges. I think it's important for you all to know that he's a leader on the state and national level. And then to have him seated, yes, seated next to a dear friend and long-time colleague, Sister Brigid Driscoll from Marymount. It's wonderful to have you here.

I came with some remarks. But I'm going to scrap those and share some thoughts with you, because I want to hear Dan's comments, and then also to have time for your questions as well.

A bit about Wells College. We were founded, as many women's colleges were, by a man, who was thoughtful and wanted to help women achieve. Henry Wells was an entrepreneur, founded the Wells Fargo Express, and that went on to become American Express. I don't know if he had anything to do with beer. Maybe they were transporting it, legally or illegally, so possi-



AT A WOMEN'S COLLEGE, YOU KNOW YOU'RE ATTENDING A PLACE THAT BY TOTAL DESIGN HAS BEEN ENGINEERED FOR YOUR SUCCESS. WHAT A GREAT GIFT TO A WOMAN LEARNER OF ANY AGE, TO ATTEND A COLLEGE OR A UNIVERSITY ENVIRONMENT THAT HAS BEEN UNIQUELY DESIGNED TO SUPPORT YOUR SUCCESS.

bly it does go back to beer at some level.

But he was an entrepreneur and he was business partners with a man named Ezra Cornell, who was the founder of Cornell University, which opened the same year in the same region. And it is no, I think, accident that Wells is located just 15 minutes from Seneca Falls, home of the first women's rights convention, which took

place in 1848. Then we opened our doors in 1860. We're located in a region that really supports women.

Our focus has continued to be an emphasis on public leadership and educating the women for that. Twenty-five years ago Wells founded the public leadership education network, which is a subset, really, of the Women's College Coalition, having our colleges come together and help our graduates understand that we need to be active in our public leadership role.

When I was listening to Mary Pat talk, I wanted to share with you that – I don't know that you shared the statistic – but fully over a third of the remaining and strong women's colleges today are in fact Catholic women's colleges. And at the Women's College Coalition we celebrate that Catholic women's colleges have been innovators, as you shared Mary Pat, very aware of changing trends in education, and in fact, have been leaders to help us take more risks as we look at opportunities and challenges within the landscape of higher education.

I've been asked to talk about why a young woman should consider attending a women's college today. How many New Rochelle students are here today? And how many graduates of women's colleges? So there's your answer. And I mean that seriously. I really do. This is a bright, sunny day. We have had very few of those days since September. It's four o'clock on the first sunny day in a long time, and I mean this, you are here to talk about and celebrate education, specifically women's education.

So my first response is at women's colleges we focus on the fact that learning is a lifetime endeavor. So we unlock the

tools for learning, certainly, through specific disciplines, and that notion that you need to acquire both depth and breadth in learning. But it is this overarching concept that you will be a lifetime learner that happens on each and every one of our campuses. That's why it's important to consider women's education today.

And another reason for me is that the hallmark of the American system is our diversity. With over 3,000 colleges and universities in existence today, what makes us strong, if you think globally, is that we have all these choices, two-year, four-year, comprehensive colleges, women's colleges, two all-male colleges. And it's important for us to recognize that what works best is when a learner finds an environment that they feel is designed for their success. And so it's important for us as educators, parents and adults who care about young people - I remember talking with guidance counselors, to remind them that young women in a K-12 environment must always have a women's college on their list of choices, because we do exist as a strong sector in this broad array of colleges.

Barbara highlighted that women's colleges existed for a long time. And you talked, Barbara, about many of the factors. I think it's important that we remain strong today because the economy has changed. We've moved into a knowledge-based economic situation within the region here and certainly nationally and globally.

Women's colleges have always educated women for competence within the variety of subject areas. So in order for women to participate fully in the new economy of today and what will happen throughout the course of the 21st century, women have to have access to various higher learning, and I'm sure it doesn't surprise you that I believe that happens in a women-centered university.

In addition, women need to be active participants in this economy in order for the United States to have a leadership role. Women represent 51 percent of the population, and we need women to have this competence. I think Barbara's quote, which I loved, was competence and confidence. Both happen on a women's college campus. We have deep knowledge, and also the confidence to then share that knowledge with the world.

And I guess what I would say to you is that it's important we have this talk today within the family, so to speak – we're supporters of women-centered education. But it's very, very important that we continue to have the conversation outside of service, where women's education already has support. I was asked to talk about why a women's college, and the fact remains that students are never asked why are you looking at coeducational colleges?

I mean really think about that. Is a young woman today, when she's putting together list of college choices ever asked, why is X college, a coed college, on your list? But our students are always asked to defend their choices when they choose to attend a women's college.

I say that just makes them, all of you, the New Rochelle women who are here today, good risk takers. The fact that you have selected a college, which is different than the choice of many of their peers, means that you have inner strength and a sense of who you are. It's important that we continue to spread the message.

Maybe another reason why it's important that we remain strong as a sector is that there continues to be such a gap which is growing, between the number of women and the number of men who are participating in the hard sciences, for both the undergraduate and graduate levels, and then also out of the workplace. And we know that in this new knowledge-based economy, that in fact, science is the key across disciplines and across career choices and opportunities.

If you look at our research, in womenfocused environments, women participate at one and a half times the rate of women in coeducational environments in the hard sciences. So we are doing, and have been doing it for decades, for generations, a good job of helping women really gain access in what might be considered non-traditional academic fields, and therefore, work fields, once they leave colleges. So it's important to them that we stay strong, and strong in the areas of sciences.

Mentoring is another reason why women should look at women's colleges. Mentoring is important, both having the strength to ask for a mentor and then being willing to serve as a mentor. And the circles of sisterhood that exist within women's colleges and within our alumni networks, and among and between them, is very solid. This is an important reason – that you know when you attend a women's college that you will grow a network that you will depend upon for the rest of your life, both professionally and personally as well. So that sisterhood component for me is very, very strong.

And I extend that, and say that it's important for young women to look at women's education, because to be validated as a woman, it's a good idea to walk among other strong women. And that happens, again, in our environments. Walk among strong women. We tend to find that on our women's college campuses women appear more in key leadership roles as chairs of departments and deans and presidents. It's important for women students to have those role models to understand the possibilities that exist in their lives.

I find at Wells and at other womencentered places that the possibilities for our students are only limited by their own imaginations. Because on our campuses there's a full range of possibilities for our students, every day, inside the classroom and outside of the classroom.

Another good reason to really share why we remain important in the 21st century as a strong sector within higher education is that women's colleges have always taken the lead in what I call experiential learning, connecting classroom learning with the world of work. We have promoted the advancement of women and know that our graduates are educated

not just for the sake of education, which is valuable, but also to work in the world. And on women's college campuses, that bridge is built very specifically and deliberately for students, so the students have an opportunity to explore the diverse opportunities and careers while still undergraduate students.

Diversity matters on our campuses. Women's colleges have been out in front providing inclusive learning requirements – very, very important. Smart students today know that they will live and work in a diverse local community, and in fact, they demand that their colleges provide access to that diversity, not just in terms of subject matter, but in terms of the types of people that they will live with and study with on campus. And I think the women's colleges have really been out in front of providing inclusive learning requirements.

I would also say to you, if not finally, but in closing, that the playing field isn't even. It isn't even. That's why it's important for women today of all ages to consider attending a woman's college or woman-centered college campus. Think about it – we have a senator in our state, New York, Senator Hillary Clinton, who is a women's college graduate. Many of the women in top elected positions attended women's colleges, that doesn't surprise me. And I'm happy that more have been elected.

But when you think about both the Senate and the House, it is still under 15 percent. Should we celebrate? Certainly, for the gains that we've made, but we are still woefully behind. We currently have only two women who are CEOs of Fortune 500 companies. We've gone backwards in terms of women as CEOs of Fortune 500 companies. As long as the playing field remains uneven, we have to count on our women's colleges and



women-centered educational organizations to promote the advancement of women, both the education of and the advancement of women.

I would wrap it up by saying that at a women's college, you know you're attending a place that by total design has been engineered for your success. What a great gift to a woman learner of any age, to attend a college or a university environment that has been uniquely designed to support your success. I go back to Virginia Woolf, that isn't it important in life for all of us, for each of us to find a space that is designed for our success, to tap into the strength of our own voice, and to be supported in using that voice after graduation.

That's why it's important for smart women of all ages to know that women's colleges remain a strong sector and that they should have women's colleges on their list of potential colleges, and should be supported to accept that risk. Some-

times I hear from women who have graduated from women's colleges that maybe we don't matter anymore, that their daughters have too many choices now, and that possibly, when I was in college or some New Rochelle graduates or Wells College graduates who are here today, that women's colleges were important then because women didn't have other choices. And now women have many more choices. So possibly their daughters or smart women they know should not apply to Wells College or The College of New Rochelle.

I say the times demand even more now that women have the support that they need to engage fully in a very complex global environment. And I know that Wells and my sister women's colleges, will deliver upon the contract of education and open up doors for our women students. Congratulations on your Centennial.

WOMEN'S COLLEGES AND THEIR FUTURE

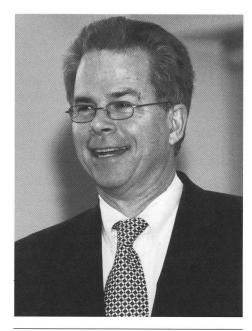
Daniel S. Cheever Jr.
President, Simmons College

t is an honor to be part of The College of New Rochelle's Centennial celebration. Having celebrated our own Centennial at Simmons College just five years ago, I know how important such events are in the history of a fine institution like The College of New Rochelle. In particular, I want to congratulate my colleague, Steve Sweeny, for his leadership of the College at this important time.

I also am delighted to be in the company of Lisa Marsh Ryerson, President of Wells and also President of the Women's College Coalition, and Mary Pat Seurkamp, President of the College of Notre Dame of Maryland. Each is an outstanding educational leader and articulate spokeswoman for women's colleges. It is a privilege to be with them this afternoon, perhaps to provide some gender balance by serving as the token trouser. And I want to be clear that the fact I am the last speaker on this panel does not imply for a moment that a man should have the last word!

I have been asked to comment briefly on the future prospects of women's colleges. Given that the original conditions which made it necessary to establish separate colleges for women 150 years ago have changed so dramatically, what should those women's colleges which still remain do to remain vital in the 21st century?

As you have just heard, many, though not all, women's colleges were founded as a matter of civil rights – to provide women with an equal opportunity and equal access to higher education as their male counterparts. In some cases, such as The College of New Rochelle, they were founded as a means of promoting reli-



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gious or spiritual values in a rapidly changing world. However, in the last 50 years that world has changed more rapidly than any of our founders could have imagined. In the last generation alone, the number of women's colleges has dropped from over 300 to about 65 today. Many became co-educational, others merged, still others shut their doors. I want to emphasize that those women's colleges which remain today are growing and

thriving. With only a few exceptions, their enrollments are rising, they are reaching out to new markets, and they continue to play an important role in American higher education.

But what should these remaining women's colleges be doing now to remain vital and vibrant 25, or 50 or 100 years from now? I would offer the following three propositions.

First, I believe the key to future success will rest on the quality of academic programs offered by women's colleges. Our research shows that most students who select Simmons College do so because they want to enroll in one of our academic programs. About 60 percent of our entering students choose to major in one of the liberal arts and sciences, and the remaining 40 percent must take a core liberal arts program and select a professionally oriented major such as nursing, management, or communications. Some of our entering students choose Simmons because they want to go to college in Boston, others choose us because they want to be at a small college within a larger "university" environment, which we provide through our Colleges of the Fenway collaboration, and a few select us because our financial aid package is attractive. But the overwhelming reason for choosing Simmons is because students want the academic programs we offer.

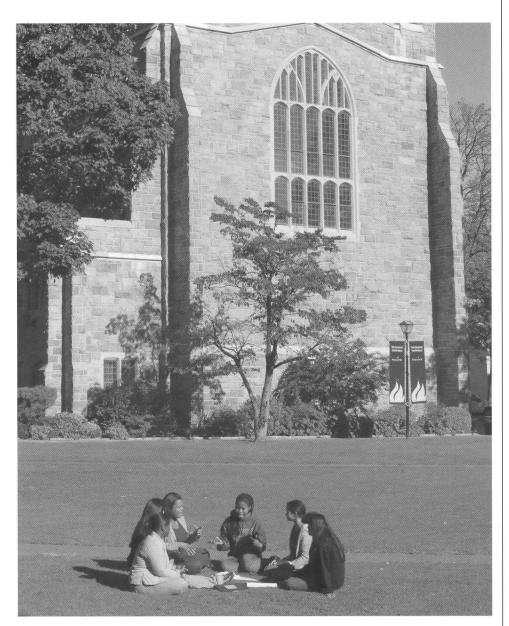
This is exactly as it should be. If the central purpose of a college or university is academic preparation and academic learning, then that should be the central purpose for selecting that institution. Now, most women's colleges are relatively small, so we need to be selective about offering academic programs in which we

can excel. But I believe, above all, that women's colleges of the future will thrive only if they offer academic programs of high quality which meet the needs and interest of prospective students.

My second proposition is that I believe women's colleges will thrive if they can establish the value received by students for the educational investment made by students. That is, women's colleges need to answer the question: Will my investment of four years of my life and \$50,000 or \$100,000 or more produce a worthwhile result for me?

That's a tough question. And our answer needs to rest on good data. That investment will need to be measured by more than statements of good intention, such as "you will become a well-educated woman" or "the liberal arts and sciences are important for critical thinking." We will need to prove that our graduates get good jobs at good salaries, that they have successful careers and rise over time to leadership roles in their professions, that they become contributing, respected members of their communities, and that they believe they have received tangible benefits as a result of having invested in our colleges.

As my final proposition, I believe women's colleges of the future will thrive if they also can establish and describe the special qualities of a woman-centered institution which make it possible for students to learn more, develop further, and achieve more than they would in a coeducational environment. At Simmons, we call this transformational phenomenon "finding one's voice." Time and time again, we see relatively shy entering students of modest academic ability catch fire, get enthused by a subject, develop close and respectful relationships with faculty, and become transformed into welleducated, competent, powerful, and confident women. One alumna described this phenomenon to me in the following words: "I entered Simmons uncertain of who I was and what I could become. I graduated ready to face the world and



make a difference."

I believe it is this special quality of women's colleges which distinguishes and differentiates women's colleges from their competitors. I believe this transformational quality is the essence of what will make women's colleges successful in the future.

But like some other phenomenon in life – such as love – we cannot describe this transformational quality of women's colleges because it must be experienced and felt to be understood. That's why successful women's colleges will need to

begin by positioning themselves as offering strong academic programs of highest quality which meet the needs of prospective students, and by demonstrating that the student's investment of time and money will lead to tangible, worthwhile results. Once having chosen a women's college and enrolled at a women's college, then students will experience their transformational quality which, by graduation, they will remember as the most important benefit of their college experience.

CROSSING THE CATTLE GATE

Patricia Cruise, SC
President & Chief Executive Officer, Covenant House

am grateful to you, Dr. Sweeny, the Board of Trustees, the faculty and staff, as well as the students of The College of New Rochelle for what is indeed an honor and privilege to stand in this sacred space this afternoon. The heritage of this institution began in Brescia, Italy in 1535 with Angela Merici, and as far as I can go back in my own family history, Angelo Joseph Bellini, my great-grandfather, was born in Brescia in the mid-1800s. I have no doubt both Angela and Angelo are looking down on us today with smiles on their faces!

I was asked to speak today on the topic of Education and Service. From what I have been told, a humble thank you is in order from all of us at Covenant House to Dr. Sweeny, Alexandra Jones, Ellen Curry Damato, and Linda Ebinger, who last week volunteered at our Crisis Center in Manhattan. Their job was to assist in organizing the donated clothes that our young people change into when they come from the streets of New York. For many people that service may not seem like a big deal, but, when you have lived in the same clothes for weeks, sometimes months at a time, the kids will tell you how grateful they are, maybe not in words, but by the smiles on their faces. This clothing, for many of them, represents the first time that they have been treated with respect in their lives. Thank you for demonstrating service to others.

I also know that you had an opportunity to meet and talk to our homeless teenagers.

Every story is different.
Every story is heartbreaking.
And every story is compelling.
I hope that you do not stop there. I



I SAW FIRSTHAND ALCOHOLISM,
LACK OF HOUSING, OR NO
HOUSING AT ALL... I SAW ANGER,
I SAW PAIN, AND I SAW DEATH.
HOWEVER, WHEN I BEGAN TO
SPEND TIME WITH THE LAKOTA
PEOPLE, IN THE MIDST OF THEIR
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SEEMED TO BE HOPELESSNESS...

I SAW LIFE... I SAW HOPE...

encourage you to take opportunities to tell others of your experiences right here at this institution. Do not move on with your life without internalizing your experiences and identifying them with your academic endeavors. I believe that this

model will make you a
better healthcare provider,
better educator,
better businessperson,
better professional, and ultimately,
better human being.

Let me tell you what changed my life or at least my ability to be of service to others.

I found myself a 23-hour drive and a world away from my family, my friends, and the Sisters of Charity. I was living on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota, the poorest county in the nation eight years ago – now the second poorest. It would be interesting to know the criteria to go from last to second to last. I didn't notice any changes.

A single mom with seven children asked me one day how I was doing...

I'm sure my answer was something like "There is not much to do around here."

She looked at me and said rather sternly, "Well, if you would take the time to drive over the cattle gate, you might find something to do." I didn't even know what a cattle gate was, never mind feeling courageous enough to visit families on the reservation. I thought I had all the answers in my head from reading books, looking at pictures, and listening to stories, that life was hard. I had read a fair amount of information on the plight of the Native American, on the systemic issues that affect the Lakota People and the works of many Jesuits and Franciscan Sisters who came before me. I am not sure that I really wanted to see the reality of where our school children lived or how they lived, nor what the 16 Lakota women that I worked with every day went home to every evening. I think out of

sheer loneliness I began to venture out.

I saw firsthand – alcoholism, lack of housing, or no housing at all. I saw elder abuse, I saw 85 percent unemployment, I saw abused women, I saw anger, I saw pain, and I saw death. However, when I began to spend time with people, the Lakota People, in the midst of their oppression, racism, and what seemed to be hopelessness...

I saw LIFE...

I saw children with big brown eyes who laughed and played and did what all kids do...

I saw hope in a mom's eyes that her children could make something of themselves...

I saw adults that laughed and told jokes and had a humor that I did not get at first...

I saw families that in hard times pulled together with whatever they had, which was little, and they were there for each other.

I saw HOPE, and that is what I realized I needed to see in all people and continue to ask the question, how can I work to keep HOPE alive with all those I would serve?

That HOPE is about to come alive for that single mom with seven children that challenged me to drive over the cattle gate to the Lakota People. You see she will graduate with a nursing degree in December.

I have moved to a new place, very far from the isolation of the reservation, to a wonderful organization called Covenant House. Whether they are runaways or throwaways, we do not judge. Our Covenant House Mission "calls us to accept every child that comes to our door; it calls us to unconditional love and absolute respect" and we know from 30 years of experience that this is what makes a difference in the lives of children.

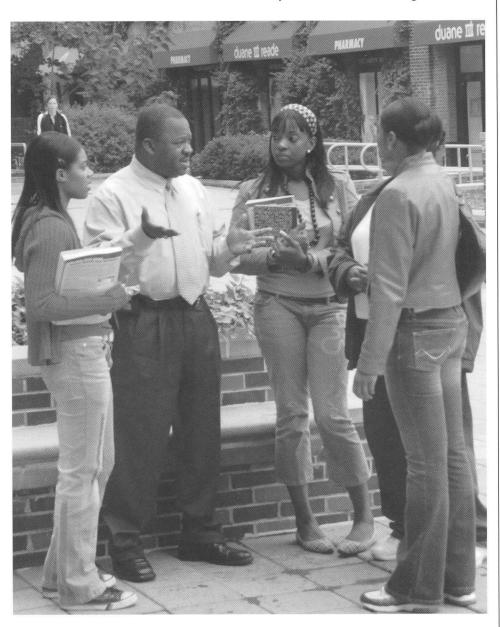
As I was flying down to our Central American Program on my first trip as President of Covenant House, I thought about that cattle gate... Again, I had that feeling that I might not want to see the realities of the people in Nicaragua. Instead of driving over a cattle gate, I walked through a rusted fence gate. There I found a place where homeless children live. Kids who sniffed glue out of a jar all day to deaden hunger pains, kids who sold their bodies for food, kids who slept snuggled together on the ground for safety.

But, all I had to do was look in the eyes of these Nicaraguan children; there was that hope all over again that I saw in the eyes of the Lakota children. The care and concern that these children had for each

other reinforced my determination and energy to continue my service.

I urge everyone to take the knowledge and experience that The College of New Rochelle affords you and use it to bring hope into the lives of those who need us. Don't be afraid to recognize hope on the other side of the cattle gates of your life. Covenant House is a great place to do that!

And finally, I accept this honorary degree in the name of all Lakota children, the children of Covenant House and every child that has been forgotten.



CELEBRATING THE PAST, EMBRACING THE FUTURE

JEAN BAPTISTE NICHOLSON, OSU
PRINCIPAL, THE URSULINE SCHOOL, NEW ROCHELLE, NY

hroughout this Centennial year, the College has invited experts renowned in their fields to speak on the topics central to the mission of the last 100 years –namely, the identity of a Catholic, women's, liberal arts college committed to diversity, service, and the future.

So given the array of experts available to the institution to speak at this commencement, you may be wondering how I got to be the speaker on this extraordinary occasion - the Centennial commencement and commencement at Radio City Music Hall! How special is that? I think I was accorded this privilege because I represent in one person some of those aspects that we have tried to highlight in the many convocations of this past year of celebrations. I am an alumna with a degree in classical languages, the epitome (with philosophy) of a liberal arts education. I am a member of the founding community, the Ursulines, and I have spent the last 40 years educating young women to an understanding of diversity and a commitment to service, to the Ursuline concept of Serviam. And, lastly, I have served on the College's Board for the last 28 years and have been part of the changes that have preserved and transformed it. So what is my take on why we have not just survived, but thrived, flourished?

When we as a college began there were no other Catholic women's colleges in New York, and not many in the country. Women had not yet the right to vote, but there were a small number of women's colleges trying to give women an educational



WE ARE THE BENEFICIARIES OF IRENE'S VISION, OF IRENE'S FOLLY, OF IRENE'S WILLINGNESS TO RISK FOR THE SAKE OF THE VISION, OF HER ABILITY TO FIND ANOTHER WAY, OF IRENE'S CERTAINTY, IN THE PATTERN OF ANGELA, THAT SHE WAS DOING GOD'S WORK.

opportunity long denied them. And then after years of struggle and finally success, there was a peak in 1960 – 300 women's institutions of higher learning. There are 65 today, 28 of them Catholic.

And so in a culture that asks not "What

can I do for you?" but "How much will I be paid?", what is our role? What have we, The College of New Rochelle, to say to the world? How did we get to be the one in 65 who survived? In fact, how did we get to be the one that came into being as the first Catholic women's college in New York State?

I think the answer lies in a woman and a vision. The woman who binds all of the above together is Angela Merici, a woman who was born 530 years ago in northern Italy in a world very different from ours in many ways, but similar in many others: a world torn by war, poverty amidst affluence, diseases with no cures, women and children without rights, a church in so much trouble from scandal that Angela's contemporary Martin Luther set up a reform movement, a new church.

When Angela was a very young woman, younger even than the youngest of these graduates, she had a vision. It doesn't much matter whether there were one or two, or where exactly they took place, or even the content of the vision or visions. The essence of vision is that it's internal. It is as much what we know we must do as what we have seen that brings us to what we must do. What is important for Angela is that the vision carried her through the next 45 years as she prepared herself and her companions for the culmination of her life's work. When the vision is, as Angela's was, foundational, then it shapes the rest of your life up to and including the bringing to fruition the vision itself.

For Angela the strength of the vision was so strong during the long years in

which she prepared herself that she made decisions that were contrary to all popular wisdom and must have blown people away. Twice, to our certain knowledge, and perhaps other times, she turned down the serious requests of those in authority to stay in their city to take over a major charitable work. One time she said no it was to the Duke of Milan. Another time it was to the Pope. Think about it. The time is early 16th century. Angela was still some years from founding her company of women and she who was always "an obedient daughter of the church" said no to the Pope. The strength of her vision was such that she knew that the real work was ahead. This was a woman of strength, of wisdom, of conscience, a woman so sure of God's plan for her that she could literally turn down the civil and religious authorities of her time.

What a risk she took. And what a difference that made. Angela was a woman of the Renaissance at a time when women were not allowed to be Renaissance women. They could either be wives or cloistered nuns. She found and founded a new way, how to be a committed religious and live in the world. One author says that Angela, finding two paths, chose a third. Her statue in the town of her birth shows her with one foot off the pedestal, risking new paths for the sake of the vision. Her vision led her to this transformational moment in the history of religious communities. We are all here today because she followed that vision, founded her company of women.

Some 370 years later, another woman with a vision came along, a woman willing to take a risk, who saw a need. Women were not being accorded educational opportunities in a Catholic environment, not even to become teachers. So she left her nice safe ministry in lower Manhattan and moved to the wilds of New Rochelle, and she too started a new enterprise, a Catholic women's college in New York State. And she did this in spite of some of the church authorities of her

time who saw her vision of a college for women as "Irene's folly." We are the beneficiaries of Irene's vision, of Irene's folly, of Irene's willingness to risk for the sake of the vision, of her ability to find another way, of Irene's certainty, in the pattern of Angela, that she was doing God's work.

And because it is God's work, this college has flourished through the years, from 12 students in 1904 to 7,000 students in 2004. The work has flourished because the vision has been passed on to generations, first to Ursulines, but very quickly to their collaborators, women and men who have embraced the vision of bringing the wisdom of the ages to those most willing to embrace it, of bringing to those who were eager, in Angela's words and with Angela's example, "to risk new things, stick with it... and be ready for big surprises." I am certain that there is not one of you graduating today who has not experienced some big surprises as you have proved to yourselves and your loved ones how much you could accomplish when an opportunity presented itself.

Some 30 years ago, The College of New Rochelle faced a new challenge. It was another foundational moment. Women's colleges - both Catholic and secular - were disappearing as the women's movement demanded that women be admitted to all male institutions. Most women's colleges were either closing or going co-ed by merging with male schools. But like Angela, the College found a third way. Instead of shrinking, it asked, "Can the vision be broadened, adapted?" It pondered. What would Angela do, what would Irene do? I have no doubt what they would have done because Angela said what to do. If the times dictate change, then get some prudent advice and change. This was not a woman with a static vision, a woman who said "my way or no way." She was a woman of wisdom, of vision, of knowledge that things do change. Irene started with an elementary and secondary school and then when the time was right, added a college. And so in 1972 and the years following, Sister Dorothy Ann and her colleagues did the opposite of many colleges. They chose a third way. Taking a risk for the sake of the vision, they broke new ground, extending the vision beyond educating young women, while not losing sight of their special place in the College's mission and history. And so came New Resources, Nursing, and the Graduate School. And that vision too points the way to the future.

The theme has been "Celebrating the Past, Embracing the Future." But we must not only embrace the future. We must shape it. We must believe in the vision. We must be willing to risk for the sake of the vision. We must know the identity as Catholic, women, liberal arts, committed to service, and diversity, and we who are the beneficiaries of the vision must be the ones who empower the present and future generations to make it their own, to be guided by their instincts and their knowledge of this College, and what treasures of wisdom and faith it has yet to impart to generations to come. And you must be part of that future, knowing what risks you need to take for the sake of your vision.

What of the future? It is, of course, unknowable, but we will have a rich one so long as we have vision. The anthropologists remind us that those organisms that can adapt and change will flourish through their creativity and imagination. On this day that celebrates a vision that has adapted and changed, that has been creative and imaginative, that has endured both a hundred years in this institution and 470 years in the church, that celebrates "wisdom for life," what better way to conclude than with Angela's very last words to her company of women:

"Now I am going away and you, in the meantime, do what needs to be done. But first I embrace you and to all I give the kiss of peace begging God to bless you. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."

MAKING A WAY: The New Challenge of "Catholic"

ELIZABETH A. JOHNSON, CSJ
DISTINGUISHED PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY, FORDHAM UNIVERSITY

t is a distinct pleasure for me to wish a happy Centennial celebration to The College of New Rochelle, Mother Irene Gill's socalled "folly." In hindsight, this folly has turned out to be a wonderfully farsighted venture in educating tens of thousands of young, and not so young, women and men toward "Wisdom for Life." The College has been celebrating all year, and this convocation is a high point as you alumnae add the luster of your presence and achievements to the festivities. In the midst of this rejoicing, I offer warm and heartfelt thanks to Dr. Stephen Sweeny and to the Board of Trustees for the distinction of this honorary degree. It now puts me in the company of these alumnae, adding me to the roster of those who have received a diploma from The College of New Rochelle. What a privilege!

In his letter inviting me to be your speaker today, Dr. Sweeny wrote, "throughout the anniversary year, we will be celebrating five foundational elements of the College: Liberal Arts, Women, Diversity, Ursuline, and Catholic." The first four of these foundational elements have already been powerfully addressed at different points in the year. Thus, "At the convocation in June, we will be speaking in particular to The College of New Rochelle as a *Catholic* college. We turn to you for a major statement on this topic." This is a challenge not to be underestimated.

I propose to explore this issue with you in four points. First, the story of what has happened to make this such a burning question today. Second, the current chapter of this story which has placed Catholic



identity in the hands of the laity. Third, the heart of the Catholic vision, shared by laity and religious alike. And fourth, the values that flow from this for a school of higher education such as The College of New Rochelle.

I. The Story: A Seismic Shift

Let us start with the big picture. The College of New Rochelle is one of more than 230 Catholic colleges and universities in the United States. It is fair to say that nowhere else in the world does a more complete, varied, excellent system of independent Catholic higher education exist. Paid for by the monies of hardworking Catholic people, these schools have educated generations of the children of both immigrant and middle class families, equipping them with the skills needed to move into the professions, and have done so in a setting that has honored and promoted their faith. Until the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Catholic identity of

these institutions was clear. Founded by religious orders, or in some few cases by the bishop of a diocese, they were owned and operated by these religiously dedicated groups. Legally, the colleges were Catholic because they were related through their church-approved religious orders to the church hierarchy, the bishops. Of course, Catholic identity meant much more than this juridical connection to the institutional church. The religious orders infused their particular spirit, i.e., their faith-filled gift or charism, whether Ursuline, Jesuit, Dominican, etc., into campus life. The chief administrators were mainly priests or religious sisters or brothers. Lay faculty members were by and large Catholic, as was the student body. The curriculum reflected Catholic teaching, where relevant. And religious worship, especially the Mass, marked the rhythm of the semesters; attendance was expected.

Keep your eye on the legal piece, though, because this is where the seismic shift took place. Starting in the late 1960s, over a very short period of time, ownership of most of the Catholic colleges and universities in this country passed out of the hands of the religious orders into the hands of the laity. Religious orders divested themselves of these schools by setting them up as separately incorporated institutions, governed by boards of trustees where lay people were the majority, though usually some religious continued to have a seat. These independent boards now exercise full authority and legal responsibility for the colleges. They have a predominant voice

A CATHOLIC COLLEGE IS A PLACE WHERE THE CATHOLIC HERITAGE SHAPES THE INSTITUTION'S CULTURE AND PHILOSOPHY OF GOVERNANCE. IT IS AN ACADEMIC INSTITUTION WHERE PEOPLE SEE THE LIVING CATHOLIC TRADITION AS GOOD, WHERE THEY CHERISH AND NURTURE IT, WHERE THEY TAKE IT SERIOUSLY AS AN INTELLIGENT AND MORALLY RESPONSIBLE OPTION FOR CONTEMPORARY PEOPLE. IT IS A PLACE OF HIGHER LEARNING WHERE THE CATHOLIC HERITAGE IS PUBLICLY ACKNOWLEDGED, DISCUSSED, STUDIED, TAUGHT, AND LEARNED.

in policy and personnel. It is no longer the religious superior who appoints the college president, but these women and men trustees, who also set major goals and are responsible for the bottom line. In a word, Catholic colleges and universities are now being run by independent boards of trustees and no longer fall under the jurisdiction or direct control of religious orders or bishops. The College of New Rochelle effected this change with the statutes of 1966.

Why this shift in leadership occurred is interesting to figure out. One reason was clearly academic, the desire to reach educational excellence on a par with outstanding non-Catholic colleges. In 1967, led by Father Theodore Hesburgh of Notre Dame University, a number of colleges signed the historic Land O'Lakes document, which called for academic freedom and autonomy in policy-setting. The college and university is the place where the church does its thinking, he said. This goal is achieved more easily if they operate independent of the perhaps more narrow views of church authorities. This academic reason gained legitimacy from a second factor, the recently concluded Second Vatican Council, which had taught a new and powerful theology of the high calling and responsibility of lay persons in the church. Yet a third reason was financial. To qualify for federal and state monies, necessary to achieve a higher level of excellence, Catholic colleges had to demonstrate that they were not parochial endeavors but American institutions appropriately open to all citizens in a pluralistic society. However one explains it, this combination of academic, theological, and financial reasons, buttressed by the spirit of the times, led to a stunning result. With little fanfare and almost no public dispute, ownership and control of most Catholic colleges and universities in this country passed out of the hands of religious orders and into the hands of independent lay boards of trustees. Remarkable.

An entirely new situation now exists. The Catholic identity of a college is no longer guaranteed by the fact that it falls under the jurisdiction or direct control of a religious order or bishop. Rather, governance is in the hands of laity who, while presumably in good faith in the church, have no similar juridical bonds. We are now dealing with institutions of higher education that affirm that Catholic identity exists apart from direct control by the hierarchical structure of the church. Consequently, such identity needs to find its roots in a college's relationship to the religious and ethical core of what it means to be Catholic. It needs to come from the "origin and heritage" of a college (to cite The College of New Rochelle's superb mission statement) as these now flow into the guiding spirit, the philosophy, and the values that infuse the primary intellectual mission of a college. And the result is in the hands of lay persons.

II. The New Leaders: Lay Persons, Called and Gifted

In view of this new situation, some scholars have sounded a warning bell. They point to the example of universities such as Harvard, Princeton, and Yale, which

began as colleges sponsored by Protestant churches but are now utterly secular. In these and other cases, handing leadership over from ordained persons to lay persons placed the schools on a slippery slope. On this slope their identity slid from a strongly religious tradition to a simply moral tradition to a broadly humanistic tradition to a merely secular tradition, due to strong professional currents in the academy. Some predict that this will happen also to the network of Catholic colleges and universities in this country. But does lay leadership have to lead to secularization? Is there a necessary correlation between lay leadership and the loss of Catholic identity? I would say emphatically not. But it depends upon the lay persons, and on how profoundly they embrace their Christian vocation.

Note how providentially Vatican II rediscovered and taught anew the ancient truth about the dignity of every baptized person. The whole church is called to holiness, not just ordained priests or vowed religious. Every baptized person, graced by the Spirit of God, shares the life of Christ. All together, as the People of God, they carry forth Christ's compassionate mission of teaching, healing, redeeming, liberating, and blessing the world in light of the coming Kingdom of God. In its historic document entitled "The Church in the Modern World" (Gaudium et Spes), the Council shows how this affects political and economic life, marriage and family life, education and cultural endeavors, and work for justice, peace, and human rights. No field of endeavor is left out, for, as its beloved

opening line teaches, "The joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the people of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ." The point is, the church in our age bids lay persons to claim their identity as people called and gifted in Christ, and to exercise their responsibility without apology. The stakes could not be higher for the future of church and society. As Dutch theologian Edward Schillebeeckx puts it, "the living community is the only real reliquary of Jesus in the world." For the church to flourish and for the presence and mission of Jesus, the Living One, to continue in history, lay people as well as priests and vowed religious need to live out their vocation of following Christ to the fullest.

Decades have passed since Vatican II reclaimed so eloquently the ancient teaching about the dignity and calling of all the baptized. How is the renewal it envisioned faring? In his recent book on the church, A People Adrift, Peter Steinfels, religion writer for the New York Times, makes an astute observation. The Catholic church in the United States, he writes, is currently going through two major transitions. The first is generational, from the older folks who grew up in a strong culture where Catholicism with its devotions, feasts, and observances was bred in one's bones, to younger generations born and brought up after Vatican II when this form of Catholicism dissolved in the light of the reforms. Many of these younger people tend to hold their Catholic identity more loosely, or more openly, or even in a more confused way. The second transition is a leadership one. Except for liturgy, management of all aspects of church life [parish ministry, schools, hospitals, social service agencies] is passing from clergy to laity, that is, to people who have not been through seminary training, who may well be married, with children and other commitments in society. These two changes are seismic shifts, happening beyond anyone's control, notes Steinfels, and how we negotiate them will determine the vitality of the future of the church in this country. Higher education is one key place where this handing off of leadership is happening. And from among the students we are educating today, this generation with a looser Catholic identity, will emerge the future leadership of Catholic institutions. The age of the laity has indeed begun.

III. The Heart of the Matter: The Catholic Vision

This situation makes it imperative to reflect deeply on what it means, religiously and ethically, to be Catholic. What is the heart of the matter? I suggest that being Catholic means belonging to a community that believes in God and God's ways of acting in the world according to a certain story of revelation, and tries to live according to this faith. One way of putting this story is as follows:

- First and last there is God, Creator of heaven and earth, who created the cosmos as a free gift and whose care is bent on the well-being of it all, the human race and the natural world together. When the antagonistic forces of evil tear apart the world that God so loves, the divine response is to "be there" in order to save. The voice from the burning bush reveals as much. God says to Moses: "I have seen the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters; I know well what they are suffering; therefore I have come down to deliver them ..." (Ex 3:7-8). Here is the essence: divine love wants to heal, redeem, and liberate the beloved creation.
- The story of revelation does not end here. The nucleus of God's saving history with the world lies in the person, life, and destiny of Jesus, God's only beloved given as a gift to humankind. His message and lifestyle embody, *incarnate*, divine care for the world, especially those who are suffering, marginalized, and most in need. His min-

istry sounds the call to others to join in with this way of loving. Jesus advocated for human beings as God's cause and suffered for it, even unto a cruel death. The great *Alleluia* resounding in his resurrection from the dead affirms that the Creator God is in solidarity with the world beyond all expectations. Now it is disclosed that sin, suffering, and death do not ultimately define the future. New life awaits.

The continuing, redeeming love of God in Christ is made present and active through the power of the Spirit. This Lord and Giver of life keeps on renewing the face of the earth, the face of the human being streaked with tears, the face of human society with its violence and injustice. In a particular way, the Holy Spirit gives the people of the church the energy to go forward into each new age, to write the next chapter of the following of Jesus in creative fidelity to what has already been revealed. And looking way ahead, the Spirit keeps alive the promise of that final day which will mean salvation for all: God wiping away all tears, and making all things new. In the meantime, every human act of love and justice, healing and liberation anticipates that future fulfillment and in its own way makes it real even now. In the history of suffering and joy on this planet, then, the bitter question of whether life has any meaning receives a positive and unique answer: God's own faithfulness guarantees the good outcome of life.

This fundamental Christian story, told in scripture, creeds, and doctrines, carries with it a particular view of the world. Overcoming the simplistic dichotomy of secular vs. sacred – this is a sacramental understanding of the world. Rather than seeing the world as evil and opposed to God, the Catholic imagination sees that creation is a gift, good and permeated with God's grace, which in turn imbues all human striving with meaning and purpose. Flowing from this stance is a rich

source of wisdom about the individual and society, most strikingly the dignity of the human person, the importance of the common good, principles of social justice, and the values of community, inclusion, ecumenism, diversity, and service.

A hallmark of this view, relevant to higher education, is the mutual partnership of faith and reason. What we discover about the world with our minds does not stand in contradiction to the knowledge revealed in faith, because God, the Source of all truth, is One. In fact, on an experiential level, our curiosity about the world, expressed in the intellectual dynamism of our questions, leads ultimately to God, while the experience of faith leads us to want to understand every dimension of life. Note that the very first university was begun under Catholic auspices, in Paris in the 13th century, with the major faculties being Arts (which included mathematics and astronomy), Medicine, Law, and Theology. Both faith and reason lead into and engage each other.

Being Catholic means treasuring this story of revelation and its values, being shaped by its memory and hope, and passing it on. This has a power to transform lives. Listen to this tale recounted by the Jewish thinker Martin Buber, who had a rabbi say: "My grandfather was paralyzed. One day he was asked to tell about his teacher, the great Baalschem. Then he told how the saintly Baalschem used to leap about and dance while he was at his

told how the saintly Baalschem used to leap about and dance while he was at his and the he

prayers. As he went on with the story, my grandfather stood up. He was so carried away that he had to show how the master had done it, and started to caper about and dance. From that moment on he was cured." That, comments Buber, is how stories should be told. And that is how the story of God with us in Jesus through the power of the Spirit should be told, so that we become transformed in the telling.

IV. The Catholic College

This brings us to the final and most engaging point of all. How does this faith and its values translate into the setting of higher education, where the primary mission is intellectual, namely, teaching, learning, research, the education of students in the liberal arts and professional studies, all of which are ways the college serves the wider society? In simplest form, I suggest, a Catholic college is a place where the Catholic heritage shapes the institution's culture and philosophy of governance. It is an academic institution where people see the living Catholic tradition as good, where they cherish and nurture it, where they take it seriously as an intelligent and morally responsible option for contemporary people. It is a place of higher learning where the Catholic heritage is publicly acknowledged, discussed, studied, taught, and learned. This requires more than courses in Religious Studies, valuable as they are to show the intellectual seriousness of faith, both Catholic and the heritage of the world's other great

religious traditions. And this requires more than the liturgies, retreats, and peace and justice outreach provided by campus ministry, irreplaceable as these are for personal spiritual growth. The distinct groups that make up a college are the board of trustees, administrators, faculty, staff, students, alumnae, and benefactors. All are responsible for this cherishing. Let us chart this in brief.

A Catholic college is a place where leaders among trustees and administrators are personally committed to the Catholic tradition, recognize in particular their responsibility to the educational mission of the founding religious order, and feel a moral obligation to carry on this work. The College of New Rochelle's endorsement of the guiding principles of the Ursuline heritage is an excellent example. In terms of faculty, a Catholic college is a place where a critical mass of professors have reflexive familiarity with the intellectual habits of the Catholic tradition, in order to provide a matrix for debates and teaching. But because there is much to be learned from sources outside the tradition, it is also a place that welcomes faculty of other faiths, and even of no faiths. Such colleagues raise questions and find solutions differently, and the synergy enriches the whole college community, provided the conversation take place with mutual respect. In terms of students, a Catholic college is a place that offers young and not so young students of the greatest diversity the opportunity to grow intellectually, morally, and socially in the context of a community whose fundamental values are those of Catholic Christianity. Its course of study encourages them to appreciate the life of the mind, gain competency in knowledge and skills, form convictions, seek truth and meaning for their own lives, develop ethical values, grow in sense of service, and find friends for the journey ... all of which implicitly expresses the power of the gospel to transform society. As for alumnae - these are the ones whose lives show whether this education has worked or not. Their moral and financial support, as well as the witness of their own lives, helps to carry on the mission.

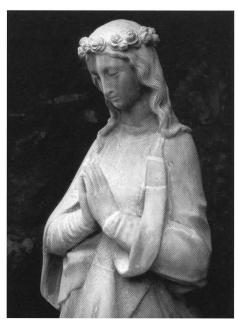
In such a college, it is not the case that a Catholic slant is imposed on everything. The various disciplines have their own rightful independence, studying phenomena that operate by their own laws that need to be deciphered by human inquiry. The liberal arts and professional programs

are taught in their own autonomy. At the same time, unlike the secular academy which often dismisses religion as irrelevant to the intellectual project, questions about ultimate things are respected, ethical issues can be raised in the classroom without embarrassment, and the notion that the course of study can contribute to transforming human lives and culture, especially the poor and marginalized, is explicitly encouraged.

To put this dramatically, here the great mystery of God is not eliminated from the scene, as if an obscenity: we can say "God" without blushing. Here the transcendent dimension of the human person, and of all history, is not refused admittance, as if a distraction: we can say "soul" without blushing. Here those who come may grow into women and men of "conscience and compassion," prepared to contribute to the good of others: we can say "competency" and "character" in the same breath without blushing. And all of this is done in a way that rigorously respects the value of intellectual inquiry, the common stuff of our study: we can say "academic excellence" without blushing.

Conclusion

To conclude: Can we pull this off for another century? I do not know. The future of Catholic colleges and universities in this country cannot be taken for granted. The immense literature on the subject agrees that there is no precedent for the forces now in play in our pluralistic society, our changing church, and the structures of the schools themselves. The future is emerging, mainly in and through the laity. It reminds me of a wise Native American saying: "There is no way? You make the way, by walking, walking, walking." For 100 years, The College of New Rochelle has been a purposeful community, rooted in the core values of the Catholic tradition filtered through the Ursuline heritage, and strikingly devoted to education and the promotion of human good. Today, you are stewards of this heritage. Taking your bearings from



this splendid past, the academic community here needs to walk, walk, walk, envisioning new possibilities of how to carry on the mission. It may well be that this will be realized in forms as yet unexplored.

Let us take heart on this glorious day from ancient words of wisdom. In the 5th century, the bishop and theologian Augustine gave a sermon on the feast of some early Christian martyrs. Those earlier generations deserve special appreciation, he thought, for the church was fragile in its beginnings, but they pioneered a whole new way of life. "When numbers were few, courage had to be great. By passing along the narrow road they widened it for us to follow." Those early people, he went on, had no idea that one day we would be gathered together here in North Africa. In relation to their time, we are "a church of the future praising God." He concluded with profound insight: "They weren't yet able to see it, yet they were constructing it out of their own lives." There is a real parallel. Mother Irene Gill and the other founders of The College of New Rochelle could not have imagined the hundreds of us gathered here in celebration of 100 years. To realize as a College that you are the heirs of such pioneering persons leads to more than

grateful remembrance. It rejuvenates the desire in you as a college community to carry this heritage on for the benefit of the next generation, for the next hundred years. You aren't yet able to see it, but you are constructing it out of your own lives. Be bold!

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HOMILY

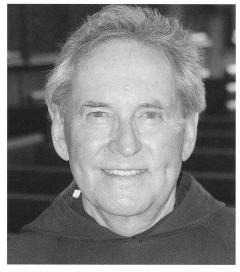
REVEREND J. JOSEPH FLYNN, OFM CAP.
COLLEGE CHAPLAIN

Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinal Time, Year C Amos 8: 4-7 Praise the Lord who lifts up the poor 1 Tim 2: 1-8 Lk 16: 1-13

his day is a wonderful moment in the life of The College of New Rochelle, to gather in St. Patrick's Cathedral to give thanks to our God for God's blessings and grace during the 100 years of education and community service at The College of New Rochelle. Countless people have come to her four schools and several campuses to be inspired with "Wisdom for Life" that has in turn sent them forth to serve their respective communities.

As we reflect on God's Word today, I cannot help but remember one brief moment in the life of this Cathedral Church that has been a source of much pride and inspiration for me.

On a very cold wintry Sunday morning some 55 years ago, a small group of laborers gathered in front of St. Patrick's Cathedral to bring their concerns to the Archdiocese of New York. They were gravediggers from Calvary Cemetery, employees of the Archdiocese. They marched back and forth in front of the Cathedral with their placards. They cried out for justice, demanding the right to receive a decent wage, the right to unionize, and the right to a just retirement plan. Walking side by side with them in their struggle for justice was Dorothy Day, who emphatically stated: "It is not just the issue of wages and hours... It is also a question of their dignity as men, their dignity as workers, and the right to have a



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union of their own to talk over their grievances." My father and my Uncle Emmett were gravediggers in Calvary Cemetery and were part of that contingent, supported by my mom, my aunt Margaret, and others who petitioned Cardinal Spellman

TRANSFORMERS OF SOCIETY.

for understanding. I remember my father telling me how he and the other gravediggers who protested that day felt the power of their actions and the strength that comes from speaking out against injustice. With that Irish twinkle in his eye, he smiled as he announced: "When the bell for the 10 o'clock Mass started to toll, we all put down our signs and went into the Cathedral to attend the Sunday Mass."

This seemingly inconsequential act of protest and prayer was a moment of liberation for these poor laborers who innately knew that what they were doing had everything to do with their faith, their prayer life, and who they were before God. Somehow the Scriptures we listened to today reverberated in their hearts. So too the social teaching of the Church they were baptized into demanded that they take this action. The clarion call of Leo XIII in 1891 in his Encyclical Rerum Novarum (Of New Things) enumerated the rights and duties of workers to a just wage (enough to support a family) and to join workers' associations. These rights were again confirmed by Pius XI 40 years later in 1931 in his encyclical Quadrigesimo Anno.

Simply understood, these poor courageous laborers were inspired: (1) to think creatively enough to bring their cry for justice to the Archdiocese's center of prayer; (2) to read the signs of the times by protesting openly and not remain silent in speaking out for social justice; (3) to raise the level of dignity for themselves and so raise the level of dignity for others.

In listening to God's Word today we hear these three values being offered the community as principles for discipleship: (1) think and act creatively; (2) read and respond to the signs of the times; and (3) raise the level of dignity for all. As we rejoice and give thanks for the 100 years of service, we recognize these values as central to the mission of The College of New Rochelle.

In our Gospel today we see and hear Luke's Jesus continuing his journey to Jerusalem, teaching his disciples through a parable that can be somewhat confusing and an instruction that challenges them to weigh their priorities by putting God first. Jesus is inviting the disciples of his time and us as well to recognize the attributes embedded in this world that can enhance our faith. In the shrewd property manager he presents one who is willing to forego his commission in order to better his future possibilities. The manager is commended by the owner for his enterprising maneuver to think outside the box, to think creatively.

In a contemporary application, one can see how the benefits of thinking creatively was so beneficial to the Pontiac Corporation as they literally gave away 276 G6 cars to each member of the audience on Oprah Winfrey's show last week. The publicity exceeded the cost. Jesus encourages his disciples to use this world's goods and to think creatively in the use of such things as wealth and how this can help others to achieving a sense of God's Presence.

In looking back to those first days of The College of New Rochelle, we see how Mother Irene Gill took the wealth she was given, not physical wealth but spiritual, and thought so creatively to bring to life her vision of educating young women and giving them the credentials necessary to become effective transformers of society. At a time when women did not even have the right to vote, she was able to negotiate with the Board of Regents of the State of New York the first accredited college for women in the state of New York. Her ability to maneuver and convince the Board was a continuing process as some of them helped her to change the College's name from the College of St. Angela to The College of New Rochelle. What some entitled Irene's Folly was really the act of creative thinking and a response to the gospel message. Mother Irene Gill initiated an experience in education that would

make a difference in women's lives and used the wealth she was given for the betterment of others.

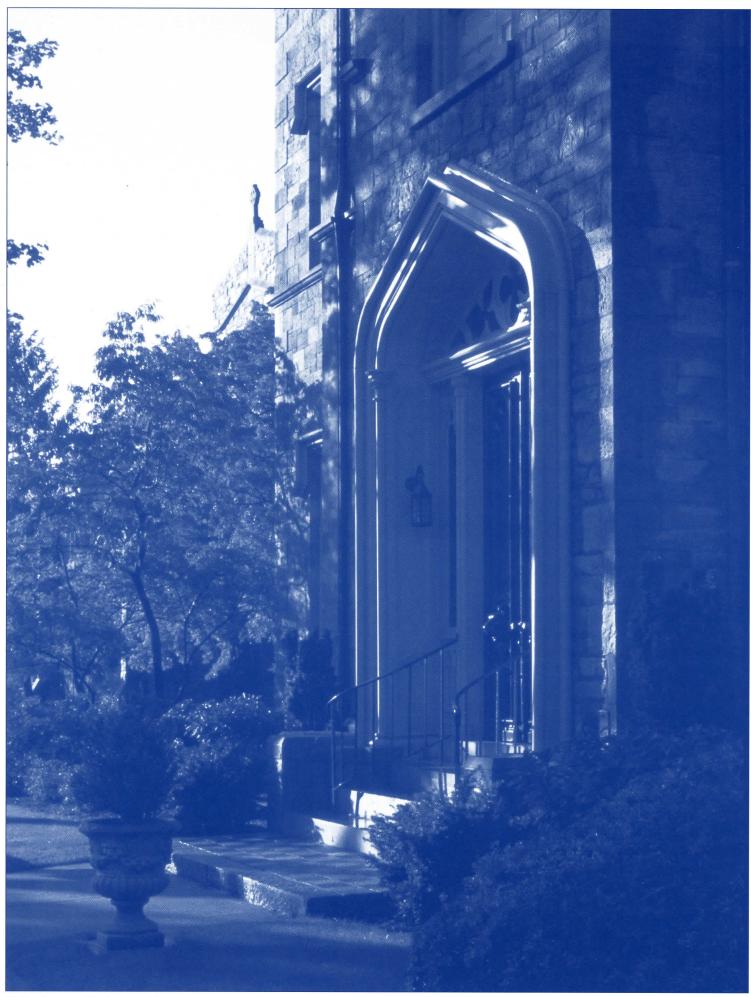
Secondly, in our First Scripture from the Prophet Amos we hear how wealth is used to the detriment of the poor and we are stunned by the words coming from God through the pen of Amos. This shepherd of the 8th century BC was able to read the signs of the time and recognize how the needy and poor of the land were suffering at the hands of uncaring, selfish rich. This violated the covenant that Israel was privileged to share with God. Amos' God roars: "Never will I forget the things they have done," at the predatory merchants and their unscrupulous treatment of poor customers. God is the one who is on the side of the poor, disadvantaged, and marginalized. In obedience to his God, Amos responded to God's call by reading the signs of the time and seeking

In response to her faith and in response to the God who called her to discipleship, Mother Irene and those Ursuline Sisters and other visionary people who followed sought to set in motion an educational endeavor that would gather others who would constantly be reading the signs of the times and responding to the needs of those who came into the family of The College of New Rochelle. There were those in leadership who could listen nonjudgmentally to the voice of young students who clamored for peace and change on campus in the 1960s. And there were those in the early 1970s who could recognize the need to offer a graduate degree that would give students the ability to respond to the various needs of the times, reaching out with an educated eye to bring change where it was most needed. When suffering happens there must be a response, and so the School of Nursing was instituted in the mid 1970s to offer the tools that presented a sense of concern and love for those who were sick. To see the needs of the times and to respond appropriately became the hallmark of The College of New Rochelle.

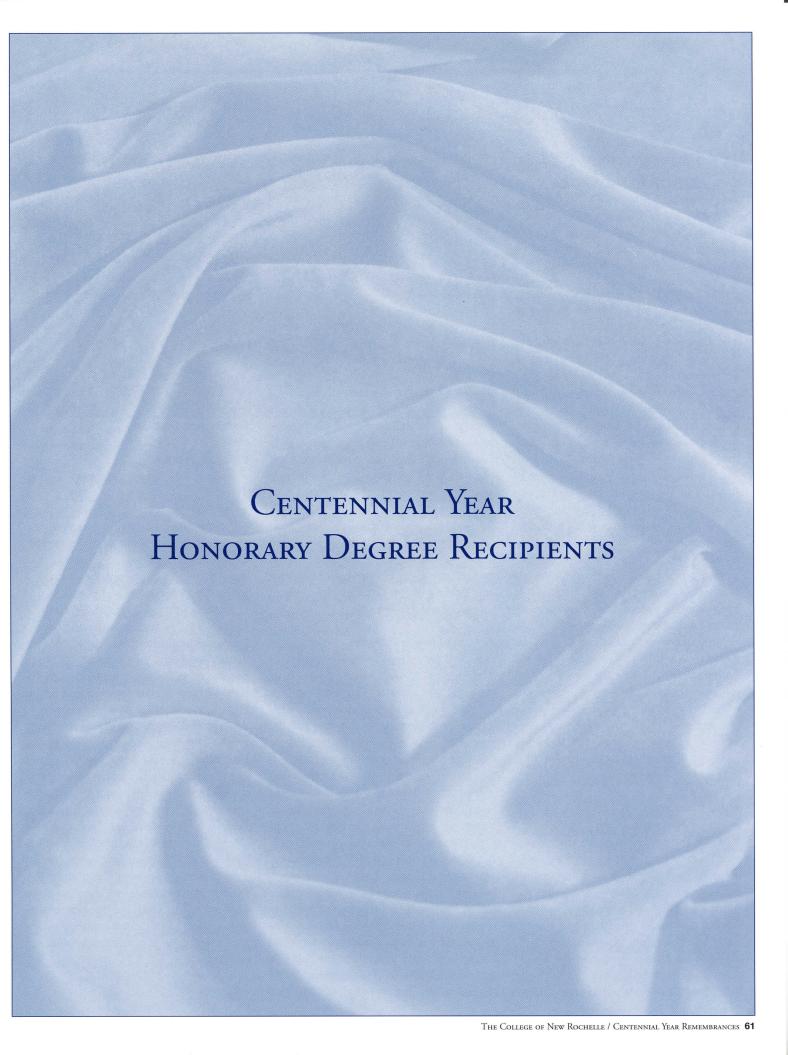
Thirdly, in his Pastoral Letter to Timothy, while emphasizing the centricity of prayer, the author points out the necessity of leading undisturbed and tranquil lives in perfect piety and dignity raising the level of dignity for all. This prayer is to be inclusive of all, especially those who are given the responsibility of leadership, since God is one and Jesus is one as mediator between God and all people. This will foster for every disciple, every Christian and every human being the dignity that recognizes that all life is lived in the presence of God as an act of worship. Acting to enhance the dignity of the human person is the way in which we recognize the presence of God in each other.

In the early 1970s, members of the College faculty sensed the need to offer an educational opportunity to non-traditional students, who were married with a family and/or had worked for many years and yet would benefit from a college degree. Aware of their uniqueness a program of education was developed to meet their needs on their terms. The School of New Resources came to life and has flourished ever since. It offers the opportunity for students to find their rightful place in society, having enhanced their gifts with the educational credentials necessary to hold places of influence in the workplace and in society. One more moment when the vision and dream of Mother Irene Gill to raise the level of human dignity has come to fruition.

Inspired by the courage and the insightfulness of Mother Irene Gill in founding The College of New Rochelle, all those Ursulines who followed the vision, and, if I may say, the gravediggers that marched in front of St. Patrick's Cathedral, we are invited to follow in their footsteps: (1) to think and act creatively; (2) to read and respond to the signs of the times; and (3) to raise the level of dignity for all. As we rejoice and give thanks for the 100 years of service, we recognize these values as central to the mission of this College. So it is that we come to the table to give thanks and be nourished with the Bread of Life so that this vision and dream may continue to flow throughout our lives and into the next 100 years. AMEN! ALLELUIA!



The College of New Rochelle / Centennial Year Remembrances



During the Centennial year, the College bestowed honorary degrees on many outstanding individuals. The following are excerpted from those citations.

Avery Cardinal Dulles, SJ

Laurence J. McGinley Professor of Religion and Society, Fordham University

The impressive journey of faith which is the life of Avery Cardinal Dulles serves as great witness to the presence of God active and interested in the affairs of women and men. As Catholic theologian, his extraordinary teaching and scholarly career has involved faculty appointments at Fordham University, Woodstock College in Maryland and The Catholic University of America in Washington, DC. He has also been a highly sought after visiting professor at many universities worldwide and has written over 700 articles and published 22 books. From this lifetime of theological conversation, Cardinal Dulles has touched on every significant element of contemporary Catholic belief and demonstrates with fierce intelligence how the richness of two thousand years of Catholic tradition is eminently consistent with the expression of faith that the new millennium requires. In 2001, Avery Dulles was named by Pope John Paul II to the College of Cardinals. This was the acknowledgement of a lifetime of faith and service of God and Church, the culmination of a long and unlikely pilgrimage.

Mary E. Lyons

President, University of San Diego
Holding the profound belief that education is a privileged tool for touching lives, for expanding human possibilities and for changing societies, Mary Lyons is the consummate educator. In her life as student, teacher, and leader of educational institutions, she has demonstrated the remarkable and steadfast optimism of the educator: that human beings can call forth the best in each other. As college and univer-

sity Dean and President she has become a visible public advocate and spokesperson for women's education and Catholic women's colleges at the national level. A product of Ursuline education, she is an unabashed champion of the ongoing relevance and worth of Catholic liberal arts institutions with a particular abiding interest in the transformation of Catholic women's colleges. In so many ways Mary Lyons models the fundamental characteristics of The College of New Rochelle as articulate proponent of the liberal arts, champion of reason joined with faith in the exploration of truth, leader who speaks, acts, and demonstrates education for service, advocate of women's education and the particular gift of women's college, and alumna of the Ursulines who carries forward their charism.

Antonia Coello Novello

New York State Health Commissioner

The life of Antonia Coello Novello truly captures the central Ursuline precept Serviam, I will serve. Her unwavering dedication to improving health care for the people of the world, particularly children, has made an enormous difference in the quality of life for millions. The first woman, first Hispanic, and first Puerto Rican Surgeon General of the United States, she was among the first to recognize the need to focus on women with AIDS and on neonatal HIV transmission. She convened national and regional meetings to discuss community health needs, raised national awareness about the domestic violence epidemic in America and about underage drinking and alcohol abuse, and was a champion for children and families without health insurance. As

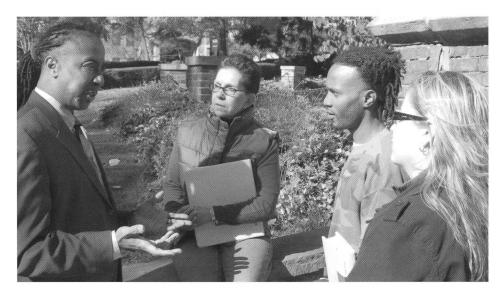
Special Representative for Health and

Nutrition for UNICEF, she traveled the world on behalf of the health of the world's children. In her current role, responsible for one of the country's largest health agencies, Antonia Coello Novello leads the effort to promote good health for all New Yorkers, while continuing her particular advocacy for those who are underserved by society.

Indra K. Nooyi

President and Chief Financial Officer, PepsiCo

Indra Nooyi is a star in the constellation of corporate leadership, ranked by Fortune magazine as one of the most powerful women in American business. The qualities which distinguish her successful leadership style are qualities central to and cultivated by a liberal arts education. Indra Nooyi focuses on cultivating human potential, and her commitment to developing people, to renewal of herself and the people who are part of her corporate family, is an outstanding example of lifelong learning. She travels extensively to educate and encourage the next generation of corporate leaders, and her corporate colleagues have been inspired to seek out the full range of human potential so that diversity has become a valued presence for decision and vision making at PepsiCo. Balancing her high-powered career with a family and her Hindu heritage, she often advises new managers that a combination of prayer and planning, with heavy emphasis on the latter, are essential to successful corporate leadership. Indra Nooyi clearly embodies the ideal integration of a successful liberal arts education.



Cornel West

Class of 1943 University Professor of Religion, Princeton University

Cornel West is the paradigmatic public intellectual who joins faith and reason, ideas and action, and criticism and prophecy to be the public teacher. Healing America's pernicious and persistent dysfunctional racism has been the imperative locus of most of Dr. West's work. His best-selling book, Race Matters, continues to be used by teachers and leaders to stimulate the dialogue and activity which he advocates. Through his lectures, publications, and public conversation, he teaches, preaches, and reaches across race and class, speaking a message of hope and meaning that celebrates diversity. In each of his faculty appointments, at Union Theological Seminary, Yale Divinity School, Princeton University, and Harvard University, he has demonstrated an unparalleled appreciation for the value of bringing together the perspectives of the humanities and social sciences and by joining his own perspective with that of colleagues within and without the academy. An engaged philosopher, Cornel West pulls from his experience, his studies, and his faith to illumine and address the challenge of America: to be faithful to the national aspiration of e pluribus unum.

Patricia McGuire

President, Trinity College, Washington, DC Patricia McGuire is a pre-eminent advocate for women's education, most notably women's colleges. Her life gives witness to the value of women's education through her person and her actions. When Patricia McGuire took on the presidency of Trinity College, her alma mater, it was an institution adrift and in trouble. Her leadership, passion, intelligence, and many talents have brought about the re-birth of Trinity College and elevated the visibility and value of this Catholic women's college and the visibility and value of women's colleges in the world. As a woman leader, Patricia McGuire serves on many boards and commissions, often as the only woman present, and she speaks and has been published widely on higher education, especially Catholic higher education and the education of women. It is her view that the way to make young girls and women truly powerful is by the example of women leaders who know themselves and proclaim confidently their values, their unique quirks, and distinctive creative genius. In this way a leader shows a woman how to be herself.

Patricia A. Cruise, SC

President, Covenant House

Patricia Cruise exemplifies the precept of education for service. She puts her considerable talents and the gift of education at the service of children and youth, especially those most in need, the homeless and runaways, those "thrown away" by society. In 1995, she responded to the call to come to the Jesuit-administered complex on the Lakota Sioux Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. In just two years her development skills produced a fivefold increase in the direct mail program from \$1.5 million to \$7 million and improved planned giving and Foundation resources. After eight years, she left Pine Ridge to take over as President of Covenant House, the largest privately funded child care agency in the United States, caring yearly for over 76,000 homeless and abused young people. Though the reservation is geographically far distant from New York City, Sister Tricia understood the distance to be one of miles not of mission, since young people at risk are only too prevalent in both places.

Earl G. Graves

Founder and Publisher, Black Enterprise magazine

Combining vision, business acumen, education, and hard work with an unwavering moral compass, Earl Graves has achieved outstanding success. The most notable example of this combination is the award-winning Black Enterprise magazine, a business-service publication targeted to educate and motivate African-Americans for economic leadership in America. For Earl Graves the goal of racial equity articulated in American law requires the increased active engagement, dedication, and hard work of citizens to overcome the great distance that remains to realize that goal, and he has made extensive contributions to shorten that distance. His creation of Black Enterprise has educated and inspired black leaders in business and the professions. This success as well as his many other contributions led to his being named in 2002 as one of *Fortune* magazine's 50 most powerful and influential African-Americans in corporate America. Also an articulate advocate for higher education, who meets regularly with students to remind them that they must be dedicated to a vision which includes service to the community that has nurtured them, Earl Graves exemplifies the best of American entrepreneurial leadership.

Jean-Baptiste Nicholson, OSU

Principal, The Ursuline School, New Rochelle Jean-Baptiste Nicholson models the optimism of the educator: individuals can call forth the best in each other; schools are the privileged tools for touching and transforming lives and for influencing society. A member of the College's Board of Trustees for almost 30 years and Chair of the Board for six years, her life-long career commitment to education includes more than 30 years as Principal of The Ursuline School. Sister Jean-Baptiste has been twice nominated for the Olmstead Award of Williams College for Excellence in Secondary School Teaching. As Principal of Ursuline, she presides over a

school recognized three times during her tenure as a Blue Ribbon School of Excellence by the U.S. Department of Education. Her many admirers credit her with a major part of this unusual achievement. In her chosen work and each day through the witness of her life, Sister Jean-Baptiste, as an alumna of The College of New Rochelle, gives renewed credibility to the mission of this College. Thousands are profoundly grateful that they have come under her loving care as teacher, educational visionary, and woman of faith.

Dianna Ortiz, OSU

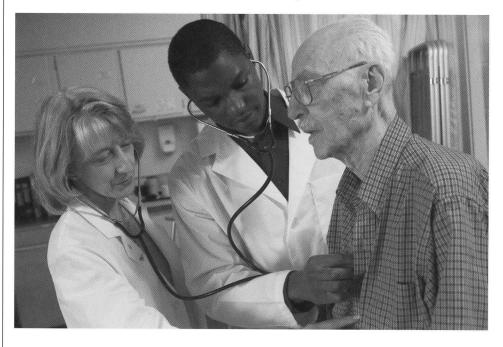
Founder and Director, Torture Abolition and Survivors Support Coalition International
Sister Dianna Ortiz has an indomitable spirit. While a missionary in Guatemala in 1989, she was abducted and forced to endure unspeakable horrors of torture. Yet Sister Dianna did not succumb to her nightmares nor did she forsake the vow she had made in solidarity with thousands of innocent Mayans and other Guatemalans who had suffered torture and murder. Instead she has confronted her ordeal by speaking out against torture and seeking the truth about the extent of tor-

ture and murder, its perpetrators, and the role of governments, both of Guatemala and the United States, by filing lawsuits, giving interviews, and testifying at length before investigators of multiple United States government agencies. Along with other survivors, she founded the Torture Abolition and Survivors Support Coalition International, which monitors and educates people about the continuing occurrence of torture around the world and to provide support for its victims. Sister Dianna truly stretches human understanding of the capacity for a person of faith to find purpose, goodness, and hope in the face of overwhelming odds.

Elizabeth A. Johnson, CSJ

Distinguished Professor of Theology, Fordham University

Sister Elizabeth Johnson is America's preeminent feminist theologian. Inspired by the New Testament letter to the Galatians, and by the Vatican II Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Gaudium et spes, that all are one in Jesus Christ and that "every type of discrimination, whether social or cultural, whether based on sex, race, color, social condition, language, or religion is to be overcome and eradicated as contrary to God's intent," she affirms the church as one body where the voice of women must be heard. Her teachings and writings focus on the mystery of God, Jesus Christ, and the theology of science and religion, the problem of suffering, ecological ethics, and issues related to justice for women. The former president of the Catholic Theological Society of America, her many books have won prestigious prizes and she herself has been recognized with many awards, including the annual award from the journal U.S. Catholic for promoting the cause of women in the church. Sister Elizabeth writes, teaches, and lectures as a woman of faith who is a deeply and passionately committed Christian feminist.







The College of New Rochelle

29 CASTLE PLACE NEW ROCHELLE, NY 10805-2339